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ON THE FORMS OF BETROTHAL AND WEDDING  
CEREMONIES IN THE OLD-FRENCH ROMANS  
D' AVENTURE . . . . .

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F. L. CRITCHLOW

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SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE  
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY . . . . .

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# ON THE FORMS OF BETROTHAL AND WEDDING CEREMONIES IN THE OLD-FRENCH *ROMANS D'AVENTURE*.

"Amurs n'est pruz, se n'est egals."— *Equitan*, v. 141.

## HISTORICAL SURVEY.

THE compositions, known in French literature as *Romans d'Aventure*, flourished at a time dating from the last quarter of the twelfth to the closing decades of the thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup> During this period, of which the greatest part was occupied by the reign of Louis IX, the Roman Church succeeded finally to supreme control of the jurisdiction of marriage.<sup>2</sup> From a stage where the church had to depend upon the civil authority for the maintenance of religious discipline such as was administered under Pepin and Charlemagne<sup>3</sup> to a stage where the church became all-sufficient in matters of its own government, represents a space of five centuries. At the end of this period came the fourth Lateran Council where publicity of the marriage ceremony was definitely ordained and the institution of banns was fixed by canonical law.<sup>4</sup> For all this, a marriage contracted without the benediction of the church possessed entire validity, as a civil contract, though the church looked upon such unions with a frown.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor F. M. Warren sets the period of excellence of the *Romans d'Aventure* between the years 1190 and 1250 A. D., although, as he suggests, Philippe de Beaumanoir wrote *La Manékine* and *Blonde d'Oxford* after the latter date; cf. *Modern Language Association Proceedings*, Vol. II, p. xvii (Baltimore, 1887). Cf. also G. PARIS, *Manuel d'ancien Français*, §§ 51 and 65-68 (Paris, 1890).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. L. BEAUCHET, *Étude historique sur les formes de la célébration du mariage dans l'ancien droit français* (Paris, 1888), p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> For the relation of church to state under Charlemagne cf. ALLEN, *Christian History* (Boston, 1883), Second Period, Vol. I, p. 11: "Of Charlemagne's capitularies or imperial laws, fully one-half may be set down as dealing with matters that . . . belong purely to the spiritual power."

<sup>4</sup> In 1215 A. D.; cf. the ruling of the church in *Conciliorum omnium generalium et provincialium collectio regia* (Paris, 1644), Vol. XXVIII, p. 204: "Cum inhibitis copulae coniugalis sit in tribus gradibus revocata, eam in aliis volumus distincte observari. . . . Quare specialem quorundam locorum consuetudinem ad alia generaliter prorogando statuimus ut, cum matrimonia fuerint contrahenda, in ecclesiis per presbyteros publice proponantur, competenti termino prae finito ut infra illum qui voluerit et valuerit legitimum impedimentum opponat."

<sup>5</sup> Cf. E. DUMÉRIL, *Études d'archéologie et d'histoire littéraire* (Paris, 1862), p. 6, for the mediæval doggerel of the common people who rendered the maxim: *Consensus facit nuptias* by:

That a marriage, consummated outside the auspices of the church, was nevertheless valid, is explained by the fact that in both canon and civil law the condition of a marriage contract was the mutual consent of the principals. The civil law read: *Ubi non est consensus non est matrimonium*; those who conformed thereto could not be denied the privileges of the church.<sup>1</sup> Still, the early church attitude toward marriage, that of a sacrament,<sup>2</sup> and the constant watchfulness of the civil authorities to protect the sanctity of the marital pledge tended to place the functions, both of betrothal and of marriage solemnization, in the hands of the priests.<sup>3</sup> So that, although the civil law criterion of valid union was the simple consent of the principals,<sup>4</sup> the growth of the spiritual power was such that, eventually, the marriage of a woman to a man came to mean a religious rite, without the sanctification of which by the church, validity was impaired.<sup>5</sup> This view is further confirmed by the fact that the formulæ of nuptial blessing pronounced by the priest have been changed, in their wording, to read as an exclusive and indispensable benediction.<sup>6</sup>

Boire, manger, coucher ensemble  
Est mariage, ce me semble.

The nobles also shared this same idea of license; cf. *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 224-27:

Il ne pensent pas a lor ames;  
Si n'i ont cloches ne moustiers,  
Qu'il n'en est mie granz mestiers,  
Ne chapelains fors les oiseaus.

<sup>1</sup> From earliest times it was allowed that a man could be married outside the church and without its benediction and yet not suffer excommunication therefor. Cf. BEAUCHET, *op. cit.*, pp. 1, 2, in his references to the Councils of Toledo (400 A. D.), Mayence (815 A. D.), and of Tibur (895 A. D.). The decision upon this matter in the first provincial council of Toledo is given thus: "Caeterum qui non habet uxorem et pro uxore concubinum habet, a communione non repellatur, tamen ut unius mulieris aut uxoris aut concubinae sit conjunctione contentus."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. TERTULLIANUS, *contra Marcion*, lib. v, cap. 18; *ibid.*, *ad uxorem*, lib. iv, cap. viii.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. AMBROSIUS, *de Abraham*, lib. iv, cap. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. B. BRISSON, *De jure connubiorum*, in Vol. VIII, col. 1098 D, of the *Thesaurus antiquitatum Romanarum* (Utrecht, 1698).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J.-A. BRUTAILS, *Étude sur la condition des populations rurales de Roussillon au moyen-âge* (Paris, 1891), p. 117: "Le mariage était, avant tout, aux yeux de nos pères un sacrement: c'est assez dire quel rôle le droit canonique a joué en ces matières."

<sup>6</sup> The priest, originally, uttered these words before the man and woman at the altar: "Matrimonium per vos contractum, ego tanquam minister Dei, confirmo, ratifico et benedico in nomine Patris," etc.; this formula does not date prior to the thirteenth century. The formula of the present time has these words: "Vos in matrimonium conjungo," etc., which arose from a confusion of the civil contract and the sacrament. Cf. T.-M.-J. GOUSSET *Théologie dogmatique*, Vol. II, cap. 2, cited in BEAUCHET, *op. cit.*, p. 41.



The requirement of a church ceremony for marriage did not exist in civil law during the period of the *Romans d'Aventure*, nor was there any such obligation until the *Ordonnances de Blois* (under Henri III, 1579) which prescribed a public service.

The ceremonials of marriage as described in the *Romans d'Aventure* are the historical outgrowth of three distinct traditions, namely, the Latin, the Teutonic, and the Romanist Christian. At the time of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Latin<sup>1</sup> and Teutonic elements had produced the completed French ceremonies of the *sponsalia* or preliminary contract of marriage, while to the Christian belonged the functions of the *matrimonium* or the sacrament of marriage. The *sponsalia* were the secular and the *matrimonium* the spiritual phases of mediæval marriage; the former had to do more strictly with the civil, the latter with the church authorities. In the *Romans d'Aventure* each function has its own observances and separate character. From the foregoing it can be seen how, by degrees, the increased prestige of the church<sup>2</sup> brought about the absorption of parts of the *sponsalia* ceremony into the sphere of the *matrimonium* formalities with the purpose of imbuing the whole marriage celebration with a religious spirit and of ridding that ceremony of any taint of barter which profane tradition had always attached to nuptials both in Latin and Teutonic history.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the influence of the church has prevailed to such an extent in the ceremonies of marriage that *sponsalia* and *matrimonium* have been changed about in importance as compared with their position at the period of the Frankish immigrations.<sup>4</sup> Approximately, the midpoint of this long transition marks the era of the *Romans d'Aventure*.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. DANTIER, *Les femmes dans la société chrétienne* (Paris, 1879, 2 vols.), Vol. I, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. LAVISSE ET RAMBAUD, *Histoire générale* (Paris, 1893), Vol. II, pp. 253-65.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, *Manuel des institutions romaines* (Paris, 1886), p. 377. Cf. also *infra*, p. 21, n. 2; at Rome the idea of purchase in marriage expressed itself only in symbol. The *dos* (called *dotarium* in the barbarian laws) designated the liberality of the husband to the wife, and was indispensable to legitimate marriage, distinguishing that from the concubinate by the fact that the *dos* was *given*. So the church (*Concil. Arelat.*, 524 A. D., § I, 4), adopted the same form of *sponsalia*: "Nullum sine dote fiat conjugium; juxta possibilitatem fiat dos, nec sine publicis nuptiis quisquam nubere vel uxorem ducere praesumat."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. ROBERTSON'S statement in his *Essays* (London, 1878), p. 173: "We now give the name betrothal to the wedding of our forefathers, having transferred the older name and greater importance of the *desponsatio et dotatio* to the *traditio et sanctificatio* or the giving away. The wedding was the civil contract, deriving its name from the *weds*, pledges

## TUTELAGE.

The status of a noblewoman in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as regards her marriage, was of a political rather than a domestic character. In the feudal *régime*, after the period when the fief had become hereditary, the difficulty arose of maintaining a domain secure, in case the successor to the fief was a minor or an unmarried woman. The patrimonial fief system vested a power in a father over his daughter, similar in nature to the control of the *paterfamilias* in the Roman family. And, here, it should be noted that the later feudal period shows a return to Roman ideas of guardianship as against the Germanic family system represented by early feudalism. Both the paternal power over a woman and the recognition of a sister's right to succeed, equally with a brother, to her parent's estate, are traceable to Roman influence. A daughter who married into a family outside the dominion of a *seigneur*, under whom she had hitherto been subject, was compelled to renounce her patrimony, in view of her marriage.

To renounce, therefore, implies that a woman was possessed of the right of succession<sup>1</sup> and with the recognition of that right came other privileges which meant the amelioration of woman's position before the law. Such changes were brought about very slowly, so that even at the twelfth century the marriage of noble women was a purely political affair conducted under the auspices of the suzerain concerned, who granted a woman's body, in the same breath in which he bestowed the rights and duties of the fief which went with her, upon the man he had selected.<sup>2</sup> In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there is the testimony of the *Romans d'Aventure* presenting plainly, as they do, the conditions of later feudal times, especially with reference to women of noble rank. These romances do not make a woman so wholly abject before her superiors as is the case with the *Chansons de*

or securities, that passed between the bridegroom and the parents, or the guardians, of the bride. The giving away represented the final completion of the marriage after the necessary arrangements had been concluded, and upon this conclusion . . . a priest was to be present in order to sanctify the legal union with the blessing of the Church."

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. LABOULAYE, *Recherches sur la condition civile et politique des femmes depuis les Romains jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris, 1843), pp. 210-15.

<sup>2</sup> P. PARIS, *Romans de la Table Ronde* (Paris, 1877), Vol. V, p. 159.



*Geste*; on the contrary, the *Romans d'Aventure* represent noble-women objecting forcibly to marriages thrust upon them and distasteful to them on account of the motive by which a suzerain was prompted to consummate these unions for his own material ends.<sup>1</sup> Such remonstrances, from their cogency and frequent occurrence, prove that the *Romans d'Aventure* portray a new period in which woman is no longer a mere subject of barter, as she once had been, but that she has emerged from the lowly condition where she was looked upon as a chattel in marriage transactions and has acquired a fair amount of independence.<sup>2</sup>

Abstractly considered, a woman of noble birth had had from early times an inherent right to accept or reject, at will, any proposition of marriage made to her or her guardians,<sup>3</sup> but this right was not held sacred, it may with truth be said, at any part of the feudal period. As far back as the sixth century Chlotaire I declared null the authorizations obtained to marry women against their will.<sup>4</sup> Numerous documents are extant which show that a father did not believe he had the power to marry his daughter, contrary to her own wishes, nor without consulting his lord and his own friends.<sup>5</sup> Not seldom, the *Romans d'Aventure* present cases of a woman being allowed to accept or refuse an intended husband, even when the offer has been made by one whose word, if need be, could readily force her to a decision.<sup>6</sup>

#### A WOMAN IN THE TUTELAGE OF HER FATHER.

Under this rubric are to be found examples in the *Romans d'Aventure* which exhibit the nature of parental control in the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R. ROSIÈRES, *Histoire de la société française au moyen-âge* (Paris, 1882), Vol. I p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Comte de Poitiers*, vv. 9687-700; *Fergus*, vv. 215-22; *Escanor*, vv. 9310-19; *La Chastelaine de St. Gille*, vv. 218-25; the young woman's protest to her suitor:

La rage vous tint, ce me semble,  
Quant vous à mon pere donastes  
L'avoir de q(u)oi vous m'achatastes,  
Ausi comme je fuisse' une beste.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Raoul de Cambrai*, vv. 6184-91, and L. GAUTIER, *La Chevalerie* (Paris, 1884), p. 345.

<sup>4</sup> T. M. LEHÜEROU, *Histoire des Institutions mérovingiennes et carolingiennes*, 2 vols (Paris, 1843-44), Vol. I, pp. 150, 151.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 151, 152.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Comtesse de Ponthieu*, vv. 84-93; *Floris et Liriope*, vv. 299-304; *Paris et Vienne*, p. 38; *Li Livre de Baudoyne*, p. 81.

Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> A father's word could create or unmake a betrothal arbitrarily.<sup>2</sup> By virtue of the *mundium*<sup>3</sup> which he held over his children he was, at one and the same time, their father and lord as well.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, the part played by a mother was insignificant in comparison; whether she concurred in her daughter's suit, or manifested disfavor of it, availed but little.<sup>5</sup> Exceptionally, however, occasions present themselves in the poems now in question, where a mother's influence is brought to bear indirectly upon the subject of a suitor for her daughter, and with effect.

The wishes of a woman about to be married, and for whom a marriage is being arranged, are seldom respected or consulted.<sup>6</sup> In order to elude her father, therefore, she connives with her lover, who has been thrust aside by her unwilling parent for another, to defeat her lord's purposes by a resort to ruse.<sup>7</sup> An indulgent father is, now and then, represented as not mindful whether his daughter marries or not, and seemingly leaves her<sup>8</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *L'Escoufle*, vv. 2905-09; *Joufrois*, vv. 3487-98, 3501-06; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 2211-13, 2229-34; *Flore et Jehanne*, p. 99 (*Bibl. Elzéuv.*, 108, Paris, 1856); *L'Atre périlleux*, vv. 3784-88; *Galerent*, vv. 7655-63, 7669-72; *Comtesse de Ponthieu*, pp. 45, 46, A. DELVAU [ed.] (Paris, 1865); *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 5602-17; *La Manékine*, vv. 511-18, 522-24; *Escanor*, vv. 94-106; *Ipomédon*, vv. 87-95, 10449-60, 10520, 10521.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Flore et Jehanne*, p. 95, where, speaking of a father's power, it says: "il puet faire de sa fille sa volonte."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. DU CANGE, *Gloss. med. et inf. Lat.*, Vol. IV, p. 576, *sub voce*, and J. MICHELET, *Origines du droit français* (Paris, 1837), pp. 28, 29.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. E. LABOULAYE, *op. cit.*, p. 15; cf. also, *L'Escoufle*, vv. 2168-75; and SEYNT GRAAL, ed. F. J. FURNIVALL (London, 1863): "Ie [Lamet] vous [Piers] requier dont," fait li rois lamer, "ke vous prenes ma fille a feme par ensi que je vous saisirai de toute ma terre." . . . "Sires" fait pierres "vous fesistes ma requeste de ce que ie plus desiroie, et pour chou que vous le fesistes, ferai iou chou ke vous requeres." Et li rois l'en merchie mult. Et fu la puchiele tout maintenant mandee si le fiancha pierres et le prist a feme. Et le iour ke les nueches furent i vint li rois lues. En la chite d'orchanie furent les nueches grans et plenieres s'i demoura li rois .viij. iours.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *L'Escoufle*, vv. 2869-2904; note the expression of the mother to her husband the emperor:

"Je sui feme qui n'en puis mais,  
Si le m'estuet souffrir em pais."

*Ibid.*, vv. 2897, 2898; cf. also *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 4343 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *L'Atre périlleux*, vv. 3784-88; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 2229-34; *Chevalier as deus espées*, vv. 4509-31.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 3058-75, where an eloping pair make good their escape by means of disguise in bearskins. Also in *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 5600-604, two young women concert a plan of evasion from home in order to meet their lovers who are some distance away.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Escanor*, vv. 94-106. For an example also of this same nature in epic poetry the passage in *Raoul de Cambrai*, vv. 5794-801, will serve well; *vide* T. WRIGHT, *Womankind in Western Europe* (London, 1869), pp. 111, 112, for remarks on this passage. Also, cf. P. VIOLLET, *Histoire du droit civil français* (Paris, 1880), p. 411, note; and *supra*, p. 5, n. 6.



herself on the subject. Such cases are rare in the *Romans d'Aventure*.

The arbitrary character of a father's will concerning his marriageable daughter is shown nowhere in the poems now under discussion to be so truculent as in the example of a king of Hungary who falls in love with his own daughter and makes as if to marry her by force.<sup>1</sup> The young woman, learning that her father's council of barons acquiesces and that permission for her marriage is about to arrive from the Pope, secures a heavy knife out of the royal kitchen, and, with it, severs her left hand. The provenience of this poem being oriental<sup>2</sup> it will not serve as an example of fact, although the accessory circumstances of the story give to the narrative an air of verisimilitude even on French soil.<sup>3</sup>

#### A WOMAN IN THE TUTELAGE OF HER BROTHER.

Feudal life required that, once the head of the family was dead, the eldest son assume the function of parental control. A noblewoman, therefore, who had lost her father, was at her brother's disposal in marriage, since to him had been transferred the *mundium*. By means of this right over her he could place her in the hands of whom he might see fit.<sup>4</sup> Naturally, this brother desired to marry her to one who would preserve well the fief which, with her hand in marriage, passed as *dot* over to him. One example in particular shows how several nobles, in adjacent domains, having expressed outwardly a desire to marry a certain noblewoman, grew angry with her brother because he had not acceded to the request of any one of them. Instead, her hand was proffered to a nobleman who, in the absence of the lord of the woman in question, had defended his estates from marauders and who, ultimately, received her in marriage, rather as a reward for material favors rendered. The ingratiating manner with which this guardian brother is represented in the poem to approach

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *La Manékine*, vv. 722-36.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. PARIS, *Littérature française au moyen-âge* (Paris, 1890), pp. 84 and 211; also vide H. SUCHIER, *S.A.T.F.* (1884), Vol. XIX, p. lxxv. Cf. also E. DU MÉRIL, *Floire et Blanceflor*, Introd., pp. cxli ff. (Paris, 1856), where the influence of decadent Greek literature upon early French poetry is treated.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. ROSIÈRES, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-70,

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ille et Galeron*, vv. 1430-74.

his sister about the marriage, and the seeming deference paid her, are no doubt explainable from her brother's motives.<sup>1</sup>

As indicative of this same material element surrounding marriage considerations a romance<sup>2</sup> dated at least twenty years later than the time of *Ille et Galeron*<sup>3</sup> just referred to, reveals a situation in which the woman to be married is disposed of by her brother to a knight who was to become a liegeman of the king according to the marriage contract, and also to receive thereby, in return for services which the knight had rendered her brother, the woman's hand in marriage.

Following along the course of time in which the *Romans d'Aventure* occur, another romance,<sup>4</sup> illustrative of the point made above, may be noted whose date falls a score of years after the poem just cited. In this poem is presented a brother ready to offer his sister, together with a parcel of land, to a knight who has befriended him, and whom this brother desires to recompense for his timely deliverance from peril. Although the young woman's hand and her brother's lands are offered together in one to the knight, he, by exception, refuses in a courteous manner the property, but accepts the woman as an all-sufficient reward for his favors to her brother. Other examples are not wanting to demonstrate how, in a brother's hand, a marriageable sister went to serve his material ends.<sup>5</sup> One case in point may be drawn from the last, in chronological order, of the *Romans d'Aventure*<sup>6</sup> which evidences no change of attitude toward woman as compared with the example used above and occurring seven generations previously.<sup>7</sup> The episode, from this the latest of the extant romances, recounts how a brother secures the privilege to marry a certain noblewoman of his choice, by yielding his own

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, vv. 952, 953 where it is to be noticed that Galeron has already refused the attentions of Rogelion, a nephew of a Breton lord. Cf. also *supra*, p. 5, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ipomédon*, between the dates A. D. 1174 and 1190; possibly 1185.

<sup>3</sup> *Ca.* 1167 A. D.

<sup>4</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, in the *S.A.T.F.*, Vol. XVIII, 1876; for the date of this poem *vide* p. xxii of this work.

<sup>5</sup> *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 3079-89; this instance, however, portrays a subject acceding to a king's request simply. Also *vide Cléomadès*, vv. 17616-22, and *Escanor*, vv. 6661-70, and *Clarís et Larís*, vv. 7975-83.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Sone de Nausay*, *Bibl. Litt. Ver. in Stuttgart*, Vol. CCXVI, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 7, n. 3.



sister to the brother of the man from whom he has, in this way, obtained permission to marry the latter's sister. Heeding not at all his sister's feelings in the matter of her choice of a husband, the young man seals agreement to her marriage and, by sacrificing her interests, gains his own. The seven specimens of fraternal guardianship above referred to evince clearly what was the character of motive throughout appertaining to woman's welfare. Five out of the seven examples just given make her marriage a *quid pro quo* in the furtherance of her brother's purposes.

#### A WOMAN IN THE TUTELAGE OF FEUDAL SUPERIORS.

This subdivision of feudal guardianship concerns itself with the disposal of a woman in marriage when a lord or the advisory body of a ruler must execute this prerogative.<sup>1</sup> The contingencies incident to feudal life often brought a female vassal before her suzerain to be disposed of in marriage. As soon as feudal domains had been converted from concessions into patrimonies it devolved upon a suzerain to watch closely any possession within his confines where an heiress or a male minor held a fief. A woman, inheriting a fief, could not marry without the consent of her lord, who, moreover, might force her to marriage at her coming of age. If the lord paid no regard to this matter, when the heiress reached twelve years she was allowed to demand of him three noblemen to appear at his court, one of whom she had the right to choose.<sup>2</sup> In the *Romans d'Aventure*, while no direct instance of this privilege of an heiress is given, there are cases which illustrate sufficiently the relation of suzerain to vassal.<sup>3</sup> The example occurs of an emperor<sup>4</sup> who, desirous of requiting a nobleman for his valuable services as a *connétable*, gives him in return the hand of a noblewoman of Genoa. A messenger of the emperor appears before this noblewoman with a summons to appear at court, directly, for her marriage, upon which she has not been consulted at all previously. Then the emperor appoints

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 6465-73; *L'Escoufle*, vv. 2255-90; *Messire Gauvain*, vv. 4325-36 and 5868-79.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. E. LABOULAYE, *op. cit.*, pp. 257, 258.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Méraugis de Portlesgues*, vv. 3833-39, and, as an interesting specimen from epic poetry, *vide Raoul de Cambrai*, vv. 5823-25, and vv. 6832-37.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *L'Escoufle*, vv. 1673-89.

the day for the wedding and orders his counts and princes to attend. Examples similar to this recur throughout the *Romans d'Aventure* and need not be detailed.<sup>1</sup> One romance<sup>2</sup> shows how a king is besought by a royal parent to restore to him his daughter, who has run away to seek for her lover. The king addressed answers the father that the young woman in question is not within his power to restore, but had been placed under the control of the knight about to marry her.<sup>3</sup>

The subject of a king's or a nobleman's marriage found frequently a place in the consultations of a court council. Apparently the decision of such a body carried with it great weight as to the choice or rejection of a woman; for upon it depended the welfare of an entire country, or of whole fiefs within a country. It occurs in the *Romans d'Aventure* that a king, in addressing his council of barons with regard to the marriage he anticipates, speaks to them as his "lords and masters" who hold it in their power to confer or to keep back the favor he asks of them.<sup>4</sup> To such a group of counsellors fell the duty of attending to any emergencies arising from accidental death of a king, as in the example of one poem which shows how a ruler was slain suddenly in a forest. The queen calls at once her barons together, proposing to them that they resume their lands from her. But the feudatories concur with the *sénéchal* of the late king, and aim to force her to marry again. The queen, however, in order to defeat their plan by remaining a widow, so the episode concludes, had to flee from her barons and keep out of their way.<sup>5</sup>

Already reference has been made to the circumscribed control exercised by a mother in marriage affairs.<sup>6</sup> Occasionally she manifested a decided aversion to a suit proposed either by her husband for their daughter, or suggested by the daughter herself.<sup>7</sup> Her opposition was futile. A rather extreme instance of the morose anger of a mother against her son is furnished by one

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Escanor*, vv. 9280-310.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 5510-18.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, v. 5512. The word used for control is *baillie*; for its significance in this connection cf. *Gaufrey*, vv. 7370-73.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 5125-30. Vide also *L'Escoufle*, vv. 2131 ff., where a king outplays his barons by securing their consent to a match before they are fully aware.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Floriant et Florete*, 440-50.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 6, n. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Ipomédon*, vv. 907-15, and *L'Atre périlleux*, vv. 3755-82; *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 7867-47.



poem,<sup>1</sup> which relates how, on the very day of his marriage, she forsook him and went to live in a distant town, because she could not be reconciled to countenancing her son's marriage with one whom she considered to be a woman who had strayed by chance to the shores of her son's kingdom.<sup>2</sup> An example of resented guardianship is that where a noblewoman, a widow, is forced by her son, who assumes his father's rights over her, to marry, whether or no, a man of his own choosing.<sup>3</sup>

Less often, as compared with the *Chansons de Geste*, do ruptures of open disagreement occur in the *Romans d'Aventure* between a seigneur and his vassal about the disposal of a daughter in marriage. The time is already far past to admit of scenes such as are found in the poems of the epic age.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, in the *Romans d'Aventure*, a king may be observed seeking permission to marry his subject's daughter or sister, or else it is the scene of a ruler unwilling to break his promise, made to a vassal, of a woman's hand in marriage.<sup>5</sup> The manners of the epic age are stamped by truculence; the age of the romances, as has been hinted at above, did not wholly rid itself of brusqueness, though the severity of its manners was tempered greatly through the growing influence of the church and its adoration of the Mother of Christ. Woman's domestic and political status owed the amelioration it received in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to this influence.<sup>6</sup>

#### BETROTHAL.

The relative importance in the Middle Ages of the function of the *sponsalia* and that of the *matrimonium* has been noticed in the introduction to this study.<sup>7</sup> The narrations in the *Romans d'Aventure* dealing with engagements state, usually, that an agreement to marry occurs between a man and a woman, either directly in person, or, in case they are absent from each other,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *La Manékine*, vv. 2069-94.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, vv. 2055-62.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Cléomadès*, v. 17925, the expression: "Ou vousist ele ou non."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Garin le Loherain*, vv. 2089-2130.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 3041-58.

<sup>6</sup> For progress in ideas of refinement vide H. MICHELANT, *Guillaume de Palerne*, S.A.T.F. (1876), Vol. V, p. ii; E. DUMÉRIL, *Floire et Blanceflor* (Paris, 1856), p. clvi; and C. HIPPEAU, *Amadas et Ydoine* (Paris, 1863), pp. iv-vi.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 3, n. 4.

the agreement to marry occurs by proxy.<sup>1</sup> The proposal of marriage is generally addressed by the man to the woman in exalted language.<sup>2</sup> If, as sometimes it happens, a woman takes occasion to propose marriage to the man, she is generally represented as either struggling against her impulses, or, if not that, is described as being refused outright, by the person addressed, for her abruptness.<sup>3</sup>

After the man has offered himself to the woman in marriage and has added, besides, promises of protection to her person and lands, or has given his word to increase her wealth,<sup>4</sup> then the woman, as a rule, acquiesces and their engagement is consummated. At the conclusion of a proposal from a woman a knight naturally rejects her hand, or else, if unwilling to offend her, expresses his thanks for her words and manages to evade her afterwards.<sup>5</sup> The scenes where a betrothal occurs vary with the narratives of each poet; it may be an orchard or a bedroom or the banquet hall of a castle where the lovers meet to plight their troth. The language of the wooer is as courteous and winning as he can command.<sup>6</sup> After swearing by *druërie*<sup>7</sup> and offering himself with all that he has in return for the woman's love, the man extends to her his hand,<sup>8</sup> or else gives her a kiss,<sup>9</sup> and, at times, the lovers exchange rings.<sup>10</sup>

Of the romances which portray a woman making an offer of love to a man, the first, in order of time, is of the twelfth century,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 2365 ff., and *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10399-440.

<sup>2</sup> For examples of elegance in diction *vide* *Claris et Laris*, vv. 7919-64, and *Richars li Biaus*, vv. 4975-5040.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Fergus*, vv. 2583-619, where the regret of the knight is referred to a regret at having rebuffed the woman for her advances, because his conduct in so doing was contrary to his vow of chivalry.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., e. g., *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, vv. 1101-10 and 1116-18.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the following romances for examples of a man proposing marriage to a woman: *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10169-74, *Escanor*, vv. 9964-75, and vv. 10249-50; *Méraigis de Portlesquez*, vv. 450-53; *L'Atre périlleux*, vv. 3755-64; *Chevaliers as deus espées*, vv. 2872, 2873; *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 319-28; *L'Escoufle*, vv. 4498-501. These romances show the woman proposing to the man: *Richars li Biaus*, vv. 1693-701; *Blancandin*, vv. 3452-62; *Fergus*, vv. 1927-38; *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 697-708.

<sup>6</sup> The form of the verb is always second person plural of address, either from the man or the woman. Cf. *L'Escoufle*, vv. 2360-69.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10169-74; *L'Atre périlleux*, vv. 3755-64.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Joufrois de Poitiers*, vv. 2097-105.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Galerent*, vv. 2258-60.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 319-28.



about the middle.<sup>1</sup> The poet shows her in an endeavor to make a proposal which, however, she foregoes owing to scruples of etiquette. From a poem of the thirteenth century, or more than one hundred years later than the example above referred to, a scene is given where the heroine calls upon God to help her declare her love to the hero. She does not make a proposal, in fact, but denounces the idea of such a thing finally.<sup>2</sup> In spite of these examples of modesty singled out from the beginning and middle of the *Romans d'Aventure* period, there are two separate instances of a woman proposing to a man, without hesitation, in the last poem of this class, which falls in the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup> There are, even in the thirteenth-century poems, instances of women proposing marriage to the man of their choice, although this cannot serve to prove what was the condition of etiquette in real life.<sup>4</sup> For simplicity of manners in the Middle Ages a clear example is given in a poem near the beginning of the thirteenth century: a young woman yields to the confession of her heart to the hero of the story, whom she awakes, in the dead of night, from sleep, she being powerless to conceal longer the passion which was consuming her, and, turning from her own bedroom into his, reveals her love. This phase, however, is wide of the purpose here and has to do with manners rather than the ceremonial form of engagement.<sup>5</sup>

Mention is frequently made in the romances of a church celebrant formally solemnizing betrothals. The Pope is shown, by one poet, presiding at a betrothal.<sup>6</sup> Archbishops,<sup>7</sup> bishops,<sup>8</sup> and chaplains<sup>9</sup> also superintend this function. In a castle where

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Ille et Galeron* in W. FOERSTER'S *Romanische Bibliothek* (Halle, 1891), Vol. VII, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 3930-33:

Onques n'oï dire en ma vie  
Que dame priast chevalier;  
Et se je faz cestui prier,  
Bien m'en porra tenir por fole.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 15091-105 and 17342-58.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W. SÖDERHJELM, in *Romania*, Vol. XV, pp. 581, 582 (1886).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Fergus*, vv. 1927-38; *vide* also *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 1122-68, where the poet lessens the harshness of effect by presenting a scene of proposal from a woman in the form of a dream.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ille et Galeron*, vv. 3567-89.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, v. 10460.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Comte d'Artois*, p. 11, l. 16; *Galerent*, vv. 6458-61.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *La Manékine*, v. 2031.

engagements usually took place, were to be found chaplains for this purpose and, if necessary, to attend to the celebration of marriage as well.<sup>1</sup> Betrothal ceremonies before a priest do not occur in a church,<sup>2</sup> but are mentioned in connection with a chapel.<sup>3</sup> Only the important betrothals of people of station seemed to require the presence of a priest or chaplain connected with a castle. There was no law which demanded a priest to preside at betrothals. All that was necessary to validity of promise to marry was, from of old, that the bride should be present with her relatives at the ceremony of betrothal; further, the consent of both man and woman was obligatory and the contract, if broken, subjected either to a fine of compensation.<sup>4</sup> For the reason that this agreement was a secular one, it needed not to be, therefore, consummated in a church.

Instances of betrothals conducted without the intervention of a priest but, in lieu of him, through the agency of one outside the church, give evidence of the time when a father's authority, or that of a king, sufficed in the stead of the priestly function, when as yet only the patriarchal function existed.<sup>5</sup> These secular betrothals reveal great clearness in the form of wording employed by the poets<sup>6</sup> and two narratives, in particular, appear to be modeled after ritual.<sup>7</sup> The romances most often exhibit a father in charge of his daughter's betrothal, when no priest is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E.-E. VIOLLET-LE-DUC, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française* (Paris, 1869), Vol. III, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> That is to say in a *mostier*, or *glise*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Raoul de Cambrai*, vv. 3683, 3684.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. L. J. KOENIGSWARTER, *Histoire de l'organisation de la famille* (Paris, 1851), pp. 122, 123, where is cited the decree (*titl. lxx*) of the Salic Laws. Cf., also, *Hugues Capet*, vv. 4186 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. E. WESTERMARCK, *The History of Human Marriage* (London, 1901), 3d ed., pp. 426, 427. Cf. also the *Aulularia*, of PLAUTUS, II, 2 (Goetz et Schoell, Lips., 1898), pp. 126, 127.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the ceremony presided over by King Arthur's wife in *Cligès*, vv. 2340-47:

La reïne andeus les anbrace  
Et fet a l'un de l'autre don.  
An riant dit: Je t'abandon,  
Alixandre, le cors t'amie.  
Bien sai qu'au cuer ne fauz tu mie.  
Qui qu'an face chiere ne groing,  
L'un de vos deus a l'autre doing.  
Tien tu le tuen et tu la toe.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Le Chevalier au Cygne*, vv. 128-32, and also *Gaydon*, vv. 10, 847-57, which, though a *Chanson de Geste*, is a rare example of the point in question. Cf. also *Raoul de Cambrai*, vv. 5833-38.



at hand.<sup>1</sup> In a Franco-Provençal story of the thirteenth century<sup>2</sup> is given a betrothal scene at early morning: the suitor repairs with the young woman's father to her chamber, and there he is presented to her; the bride is also presented to the young man and her consent to marriage is secured. The formal introduction of the man to the woman and the woman to the man, and the rest of the ceremony, conclude with the shaking of hands of the pair and a word of farewell from the woman to her departing lover.<sup>3</sup>

Illustrations from manuscripts depicting a betrothal scene show the presiding figure with the man on his right hand and the woman on his left.<sup>4</sup> The young man's left hand is held in the right hand of the king who is superintending the ceremony, while the young woman's right hand, covered with a long mitt, is enclosed in the king's left hand. The head of the king turns, as if in speaking posture, toward the young man who, with raised right hand, seems to be pledging himself at the moment.<sup>5</sup> Taken collectively, these secular betrothals present no wider variations in the *Romans d'Aventure* than have been noticed here above, nor do they differ in form from the ceremony in charge of a celebrant of the church.

#### BETROTHAL BEFORE A COURT OF BARONS.

The part exercised by a king's barons or court council in the matter of the betrothal of royal couples falls more properly, for treatment, under the subject of *tutelage* as it offers few important data for this division of the subject. However, there are several examples of sufficient value to include under a separate rubric.<sup>6</sup> The function of the barons at a betrothal appears

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Cléomades*, vv. 17645-51, *Flamenca*, vv. 264-89; *Olivier de Castille*, p. 54; *Le Comte d'Artois*, p. 41; *Chevaliers as deus espées*, vv. 4544-55; *Joufrois de Poitiers*, vv. 3501-12.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Flamenca*, vv. 2644 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, v. 289, "Soan dis: 'A Dieu vos coman.'"

<sup>4</sup> Cf., for reproductions of the MS illustrations, *Le Comte d'Artois*, p. 41, and *Olivier de Castille*, p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. P. BERGMANS, *Li livre d'hystoyre de Olivier de Castille et de Artus d'Algarve*, (Gand, 1897), pp. 7, 8: "Au point de vue des mœurs, sujets tels que la scène des fiançailles et celle du mariage offrent un réel intérêt documentaire."

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *L'Escoufle*, vv. 2314-38; *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 8314-20; *Sone de Nausay*, p. 434.

to be ornamental, and their presence merely for sake of added dignity,<sup>1</sup> but in a romance of the beginning of the thirteenth century are set forth the details of transactions which occur between a ruler and his nobles whose permission to give his daughter in marriage was secured by means of a stratagem on his part.<sup>2</sup> In this story, the disposal of the woman's hand lay entirely with the council of the king, who himself could not proceed except upon their initiative. The ceremony of this betrothal is as follows: the emperor presides as celebrant and the pair are represented as standing before him in costly garments; the youth takes the hand of the girl, and the pledging follows before the holy relics and in presence of fifty barons.<sup>3</sup> Either secular or church celebrants are represented as presiding over these functions at which barons are said to attend. Only in the case of royal *sponsalia* ceremonies are barons mentioned as present at the solemnization of betrothals.

#### BETROTHAL EFFECTED INDIRECTLY.

Betrothal by proxy occurred frequently during the Middle Ages, and was occasioned by the exigencies incident to the life of those times. There exist accounts of historical examples of this form of betrothal which serve as reference and as a basis of comparison for the fictitious descriptions found in the *Romans d'Aventure*.<sup>4</sup> One of these latter merits analysis here on account of the clearness of its outline of the ceremony in question.<sup>5</sup> At

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the stock expressions employed by the poets: "Voiant la cort et le barnage," and "Tout par devant la baronnie," as simply descriptive.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *L'Escoufle*, v. 2187, where there is question of a *don* to be made by the king's barons.

<sup>3</sup> This couple was not of an age suitable for marriage, but to obviate this hindrance the emperor had, in their case, an earnest of real marriage celebrated, called *sponsalia per verba de futuro*. Cf. BEAUCHET, *op. cit.*, p. 39, and A. SCHULTZ, *Das höfische Leben zur Zeit der Minnesinger* (Leipzig, 1889), Vol. I, p. 630. For an example of betrothal solemnization before a king and barons cf. *Raoul de Cambrai*, vv. 5838-40:

Sor une table font les sains aporter,  
Ilueques font les sairemens jurer,  
Berniers del prendre et Guerris del donner.

The sacredness of this oath upon *sains* is shown clearly, though in another connection than betrothal, in *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 11205-17.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. SCHULTZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 618-21, for various examples of betrothal by proxy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 2563-86.



an Easter festival, thirty white-haired barons appear, representing the emperor of Greece, coming to seek, in his name, the hand of Melior, the Roman emperor's daughter, for Partenidon, the Greek emperor's son. The embassy is clad in fine raiment and adorned with gold and jewels. After an exchange of salutations between the emperor and the ambassadors, a spokesman slips forward and points out to him the mission of the Greeks. The woman, Melior, is asked in marriage in return for an ample supply of material wealth<sup>1</sup> to be given the daughter in case her father consents, which he is cautioned by the embassy to do.<sup>2</sup> The emperor next takes counsel with his barons concerning the offer and the agreement of marriage follows.<sup>3</sup> Both sides—the emperor and ambassadors—pledge to have the fulfilment of their promise take effect on St. John's day.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the city are heard shouts and tumults of rejoicing because the emperor's daughter has been betrothed.<sup>5</sup> However, the real lover of Melior receives the same news with bewildered chagrin, and takes to his bed on account of the fact that his sweetheart had been affianced to another man.<sup>6</sup> The Greek embassy remained at court with the Roman emperor, and then departed after three days.

The simple delivery of a message of love and, with it, a ring sent to a young woman by a knight as a token of his wish to marry her is instanced in a poem of the seventh decade of the thirteenth century.<sup>7</sup> This shows a servant ordered by his master to appear with a message of proposal and a ring before a woman whom the knight had never seen; she, upon hearing the words of the messenger, evinced great pleasure and gave him an answer to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, vv. 2627-30.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, vv. 2637, 2638:

Garde n'i ait refusement,  
Ci voi tes princes et ta gent.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, v. 2640: "Si tu cest plait otroieras."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, v. 2646: the length of time between betrothal and marriage in this case was nearly two months. For the regulation as to length of time required to elapse between the pledge of betrothal and marriage *vide* A.-A. BEUGNOT, *Assises de Jérusalem* (Paris, 1843), Vol. II, p. 112, and E. MARTÈNE, *De antiquis ecclesiae ritibus* (Antwerp, 1763-64), Vol. IV, p. 442. Cf. also *Flore et Jehanne*, pp. 96, 97.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, v. 2652: "Que dounee ert lor damoisele."

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, v. 2660: "Que afiee estoit sa drue."

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 4205-60.

take back, favorable to the knight's suit.<sup>1</sup> Contrary to this attitude of a woman accepting a lover whose suit was urged indirectly, there is an example of a woman upbraiding a king through his messenger for the reason that the suitor did not appear in person and was therefore committing a serious breach of etiquette. This being the only case of protest on this ground in the *Romans d'Aventure*, there is nothing to affirm concerning the standard of politeness in such a matter. However, in vindication of the woman's position, it is to be noticed that the sequel to the episode portrays the king departing to her castle in order to comply with her wishes.<sup>2</sup>

#### WEDDING.

The *Romans d'Aventure* refer to the wedding ceremony always as *espousailles*.<sup>3</sup> This function is represented, in the poems in question, as occurring usually in a church, and always superintended by celebrants whose authority was that of the sacred priesthood of the Roman Church.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes a wedding ceremony is described as taking place in a castle. Of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 4251-60:

Car mesire Gauvains m'envoie  
A vous et dist que soiez soie,  
Quar il est vostre chevaliers  
De cuer et de cors tous entiers,  
Si vous envoie .j. anelet,  
Ou tout a vo vouloir se met.  
Blanchandine en riant respont:  
" Par Dieu, l'autime roi del mont,  
Je ne le quier ja refusser  
Bel m'est quant il me daigne amer."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Roi Flore et la belle Jehanne*, pp. 152, 153. For other examples of the kind treated in this subdivision above cf. *Cligès*, vv. 2859-70, and *Comte d'Artois*, pp. 69 and 84.

<sup>3</sup> According to the meaning of the Latin etymon of this word *espousailles*, it should connote only *betrothal*. But, as a representative of the Latin *sponsalia*, the word *fiançailles* is used in French, from *fidantia* (*vide* KÖRTING, *Etym. Wörterbuch*, s. v.). And the French language, of the Romance idioms alone, has made this change, which affects also the forms *époux* and *épouse*. These latter, in French, have the meaning of *man and wife*, whereas in other Romance languages they indicate only persons betrothed. Occasionally a variant form occurs, like *espousement*; cf. *Guillaume de Dole*, v. 5367, and *Auberée*, v. 50; cf. EBELING'S comment on *espousement* in his edition of this fableau, p. 45 (Halle, 1895). Cf. also *Guillaume de Palerne*, v. 8320, and *Roi Flore et la belle Jehanne*, pp. 93 and 96, where the words *mariage* and *mariée* occur respectively in the sense of "betrothal" and "betrothed." Likewise in *Fergus*, v. 6902, *mariage* occurs in the same sense.

<sup>4</sup> Just as in the case of betrothals already cited (p. 4, n. 1, and p. 13, n. 9), the celebrants at weddings described in the *Romans d'Aventure* represent high and low position in order of ecclesiastical rank; cf. *Ille et Galeron*, v. 6551, where the Pope presides at a ceremony, and in *Comte de Poitiers*, v. 978, an abbot. Cf. also *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 3450-55.



twenty-four examples of wedding description here chosen from the *Romans d'Aventure* fourteen ceremonies are performed in a church, away from a castle.<sup>1</sup> Seven marriage scenes are represented as happening in castles<sup>2</sup> and three are not designated as to where the ceremony is performed.<sup>3</sup>

The expressions, used by the poets, in stating how a marriage was celebrated vary somewhat: four cases declare the man to have married the woman directly,<sup>4</sup> while nine instances show that the celebrants married the bride to the groom, or married them to each other mutually.<sup>5</sup> Two examples narrate the marriage ceremony as being conducted by the priest, who questions the parties in turn. In each case the groom is the one first addressed, and, afterward, the bride.<sup>6</sup> The remainder of the examples do not state clearly enough the details of the wedding ceremony to admit of a fixed classification.<sup>7</sup>

As a rule the poets confine the wedding ceremony in their works to the marriage of one pair, although, occasionally, as many as three couples are joined at one nuptial celebration and, as sometimes happens, two pairs are united.<sup>8</sup> In whatever manner a poet depicts a nuptial service he shows plainly that the woman is the subsidiary party to the sacred contract before the priest. Two features of two separate romances may have their place here:

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Éracles*, vv. 2812, 2813; *Ille et Galeron*, vv. 6547-51; *Ipomédon*, vv. 87-95; *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 8899-8909; *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10711, 10712; *Galerent*, vv. 7699-7701; *Fergus*, vv. 6937-40; *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 5348, 5349; *L'Escoufle*, vv. 8298, 8299; *Flamenca*, v. 292; *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 14776, 14777; *Claris et Laris*, vv. 29568, 29569; *Escanor*, vv. 23022, 23023; *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6071-73.

<sup>2</sup> *Ille et Galeron*, vv. 1516-29; *Comte de Poitiers*, vv. 971-81; *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, vv. 1305-10; *Roman de la Violete*, vv. 6573-82; *La Manékine*, vv. 2029-40; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 4738-55; *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 17019-49.

<sup>3</sup> *Richars li Biaus*, vv. 4105-25; *Comtesse de Ponthieu*, pp. 2, 3; *Olivier de Castille*, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Éracles*, vv. 2812, 2813; *Fergus*, vv. 6918, 6919; *Roman de la Violete*, vv. 6573, 6574; *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 17031, 17032.

<sup>5</sup> *Ille et Galeron*, vv. 1525, 6551; *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, vv. 1306, 1307; *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 8904, 8905; *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10733-35; *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 14988, 14989; *Claris et Laris*, vv. 29568, 29569; *Escanor*, vv. 23027, 23028; *La Manékine*, vv. 2037, 2038.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Comte de Poitiers*, vv. 978-81; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 4740-45.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Galerent*, vv. 7699-724; *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 5367-71; *L'Escoufle*, vv. 8283-89; *Flamenca*, vv. 290-92; *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6071-6102; *Richars li Biaus*, vv. 4120-25; *Comtesse de Ponthieu*, pp. 2, 3; *Comte d'Artois*, p. 22; *Olivier de Castille*, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 8899-8909; *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10711-35; and *Escanor*, vv. 23021-33; *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6071-108.

the bathing of the bride-elect two whole days before her marriage, as set forth in an early romance, and the reference in another poem to the formality of a kiss at the close of the wedding service.<sup>1</sup>

In order to add a more constructive phase to the analysis now in hand, it will be necessary to point out the connected details of one entire wedding service, such as are given, for instance, in the romance of *Sone de Nausay*.<sup>2</sup> The immediate context in this lengthy poem does not show at what time the marriage of Sone with Odee takes place. The ceremony occurs in the castle at Galoche, and all but the great nobles and ladies (*la grant baronnie*) are excluded. The clerks do the chanting of the service; an archbishop, three bishops, and an abbot celebrate the mass. Sone removes his mantle of scarlet and ermine,<sup>3</sup> and robes himself in a white cloak (*une blanche*). The pair are led up to the altar<sup>4</sup> and all present bend backward (*souvins*). After this a care cloth of *samit* is spread over Sone and Odee.<sup>5</sup> White cloth-pieces (*touailles*) are then cast over the bridal pair,<sup>6</sup> and in this white apparel they hear the archbishop intone the nuptial mass. At the close of this part of the service the pair, standing up, receive the sacrament. At the order of the priest, the bride and groom retire from the altar and are then anointed. All present wear white. Finally, an abbot chants a mass and the offering is made, participated in first by the king, and later by the others.

Unfortunately none of the poets of the *Romans d'Aventure* carries the element of realism, for which this general class of literature has been distinctive in every age, so far as to give, word for word, each phase of the wedding solemnization in the church.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Éraclès*, v. 2576, and *Flamenca*, v. 297; this last reference possibly has to do with the *pax* or osculatory as found in MARTÈNE, *op. cit.*, p. 616. By way of comparison cf. the mediæval German poem *Helmbrecht*, vv. 1503-34, and K. WACKERNAËGEL, *Verlöbniß und Trauung* in HAUPT's *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum* (Leipzig, 1842), Vol. II, p. 548 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. this poem, vv. 17017-54. The night before the wedding day Sone spends in fasting and prayer; cf. *infra*, p. 33, n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. vv. 16746, 16747.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. VIOLLET-LE-DUC, *Dict. rais. de l'Arch.*, Vol. II, p. 18 (Paris, 1868-74).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. SCHULTZ, *Das höfische Leben*, Vol. I, p. 344.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the *Roman de Rou et des Ducs de Normandie*, (ed.) F. PLUQUET (Rouen, 1827) Vol I, p. 276.

<sup>7</sup> The descriptive tendency has been characteristic of all romantic literature of which the *Romans d'Aventure* represent the middle stage, placed as they are between the post-classic sea-romances like *Theagenes and Chariclea* of HELIODORUS (written, according to Jebb, 390 A. D.), and the modern *Paul et Virginie* of J.-H. BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE (written 1787).



However, the nucleus of the church ritual is exhibited in three romances<sup>1</sup> where the priest proposes the bride to the groom for acceptance and *vice versa*.<sup>2</sup> Usually at the same time as the question of assent to marry is being asked by the priest, he takes the right hand of the groom and that of the bride in such a manner that the pair hold each other's right hand, and the celebrant then places his own hands over those he has brought together into a clasped position.<sup>3</sup> Then is pronounced the nuptial blessing. With this the bride and groom pass out of the church. The groom is represented as walking on the right side of the bride from the church, in order to have his right arm free for defense, in keeping with ancient custom.<sup>4</sup> A far better clue to a ritual than is given in any one of the *Romans d'Aventure* and a form of service which exhibits the two cardinal conditions requisite for an honorable marriage, namely: *affinity* and *consent*, is to be found in a prose romance here cited below.<sup>5</sup> Still, as has been already pointed out, enough details of the wedding ceremony are to be gathered from the *Romans d'Aventure*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Comte de Poitiers*, vv. 971-81; *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 5370, 5371; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 4738-42.

<sup>2</sup> For the origin of this ritual cf. BRUNS, *fontes*, p. 86 (ed. MOMMSEN ET GRADENWITZ, Lips., 1893, 5th ed.): "Coemptio vero certis sollemnitatibus peragebatur et sese in coemendo unicum interrogabant, vir, ita, an sibi mulier materfamilias esse vellet? Illa respondebat velle. Item mulier interrogabat; an vir sibi paterfamilias esse vellet? Ille respondebat velle." This formula, cited from BOETHIUS, *Schol. Virgiliana ad Aen.*, 4, 214, is the first part of the ceremony, the second part of which had to do with an appearance of purchase (*coemptio*) of the bride by the groom, who struck a pair of scales with a coin, "matrimonium per aes et libram." This fictitious sale of Roman usage is the counterpart of the German custom of "matrimonium per solidum et denarium" described by TACITUS, *Germania*, 18 (ed. H. FURNEAUX, Oxford, 1894), but confounded by him with the Roman.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Comte de Poitiers*, vv. 978, 979; *La Manékine*, vv. 2036, 2037.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Comte d'Artois*, p. 22; also L. GAUTIER, *La Chevalerie*, p. 368.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. R. DE MAULDE DE LA CLAVIÈRE, *Les femmes de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1898), note to p. 34: The priest, in a romance by G. CAVICEO (written in 1508) addresses a man and woman before him as follows:

Pérégrin et vous Gèneve, estes vous francs et libérés de toute religion secrette ou manifeste?

*Pérégrin et Gèneve*: Nous sommes libérés sans en rien estre obligez.

*Ministre*: Estes-vous point en affinité conjointz?

*Pérégrin et Gèneve*: Nulle fut l'affinité et petite l'amytié.

*Ministre*: Avez-vous point promis à autre homme ne femme par mariage ne espousailles?

*Pérégrin et Gèneve*: Non, jamais.

*Ministre*: De vostre commun consentement estes-vous disposez à célébrer le présent saint sacrement de mariage?

*Pérégrin et Gèneve*: De cueur et de foy faire le voulons.

*Ministre*: Toy, dame, le doy, et Pérégrin, l'annel imposeras.

to form an approximate description of the entire church service. There are a number of expressions in the *Romans d'Aventure* which indicate their origin from church ritual by their form, and, according to the marriage formulæ of the church, handed down, are the identical, albeit fragmentary, wording of that ritual.<sup>1</sup>

The bridal procession to the church is the occasion which the poet takes of extolling the beauties of the bride's form and dress; the groom, in these narrations, is almost lost from sight at this juncture.<sup>2</sup> The description of ceremonies in the front of the church is next attended to.<sup>3</sup> Then follows the account of the singing and music as the wedding service commences.<sup>4</sup> Hereupon, the remainder of the celebration at the church is divided into two parts: the marriage and the mass,<sup>5</sup> between which a short interval supervenes for change of priests' vestments.<sup>6</sup> Then, for the most part, at the close of the service, the mass is sung.<sup>7</sup>

It remains now to add wherein the poems under investigation do not show parallelism with the church formulæ of wedding consecration. In all the examples just considered, which represent a period of nearly two hundred years, there is no reference to any

<sup>1</sup> Cf., *Comte de Poitiers*, the words: "Sanctus," v. 972, and "Aleluia," v. 974; *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, the expression in v. 1307: to receive a woman "de main d'un abé;" also *Éracles*, v. 5075: the expression "par main de prestre;" *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 8905-6: The patriarch Alexis "les assamble a mariage Par le coustume et par l'usage Qu'il menoient en la contrée;" *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10729, 10730: "Li arcevesque sont avant Lor croces en lor mains tenant;" *Fergus*, v. 6939 (var.): "Luite est euvangile et epistle;" *Guillaume de Dole*, vs. 5370, 5371: "En l'onor dou saint Esperit Et chanta de la Trinité;" *Escanor*, vv. 23021-26: here is a reference to the institution of banns; cf. *ibid.*: "par sairement et par paroles," v. 23033; *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6083-86: "Li arcevesque et la clergie Ont tantost messe commence Que l'en dist du Saint-Esprite. Et quant l'Evangile fu dite;" *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 4741, 4742: the priest "puis demanda chascun par soi S'il voellent estre à loy."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Éracles*, vv. 2570-76; *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10711-30; *Galerent*, vv. 7699-7703; *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 14976-79.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 8894-99; *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6074-77; *Amadas et Ydoine*, vv. 2343-94; *Cléomadès*, vv. 17215-20. Cf. MARTÈNE, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 616, 617, where are given directions to the officiating priest before the nuptial blessing.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Comte de Poitiers*, vv. 972, 973; *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 5370, 5371; *Fergus*, vv. 6021-23; cf. DU CANGE, *Gloss. med. et inf. Lat.*, Vol. I, p. 577, col. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Usually the nuptial mass is made to occur after the wedding, as it should, but the romances of *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6083-85, and *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 17028, 17029 reverse this order.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, v. 10728; *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 5290-93; *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 17027, 17028.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *La Manékine*, v. 2040; *Sone de Nausay*, v. 17029; sometimes the mass is designated as being said, only; cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 8921, 8922.



ring ceremony. While the betrothal formalities required a ring for the woman to wear and the *Romans d'Aventure* are represented as usually providing her with this pledge of lovers,<sup>1</sup> still no mention is made of a ring in the various narrations of a marriage ceremony.<sup>2</sup> In the second place the romances take no account of any *wedding* ceremony at the church portal, where, according to the St. Gatien ritual here cited, the entire wedding service was conducted, up to the point where the priest placed the ring upon the bride's hand.<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, the wedding garments of noble persons in the middle ages were white, but none of the romances, save one, gives any record of this fact.<sup>4</sup>

The groom is generally represented, in all of these poems, as having received knighthood before marriage, although to be a knight was not a condition of marriage. This is shown in the romance of *Sone de Nausay*, where one of the grooms, Henris, is not dubbed until after his marriage. The same is true of Jehan in *Jehan et Blonde*. In view of the fact that a youth could become knighted at fifteen years of age, it is plain that the age at marriage of both a bride and her groom was much earlier than in modern times. The romances state the age before a marriage as seventeen years for the groom and fifteen years for the bride, and in general, these numbers are a true record. Chrétien de Troyes represents Cligès as in the flower of his age at fifteen years. The church required the bride at marriage to be twelve years old, and the groom to be in his sixteenth year.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE RING IN BETROTHAL.

Just as the function of betrothal, in the Middle Ages, implied far more as an agreement, in the nature of a contract, not to be revoked without serious consequences, so also the betrothal ring,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Conte de la Violete*, vv. 6672-80.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Dr. F. HOFMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 839, and p. 24, n. 2, *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. MARTÈNE, *op. cit.*, p. 616; also the expression in the *Concil. Trevir.*, c. 5: "matrimonium cum honore et reverentia et in facie ecclesiae celebratum."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 17031, 17047, 17048; also, *Joufrois de Poitiers*, vv. 1508 and 1522, where reference is made to the priest's vestments. Cf. also *Chevaliers as deus espées*, vv. 10323-28, where the queen's wedding dress is black samite worked in gold with figures of beasts and birds.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. P. LABBÉ ET COSSART, *Collectio conciliorum* (Paris, 1671), Vol. X, p. 608.

or what was substituted for it sometimes, was held in greater esteem, relatively, than at a later period.<sup>1</sup> None of the *Romans d'Aventure* in the course of a wedding description refer to that part of the ceremony where the priest hands the ring to the groom in order that the latter may place it upon the bride's finger,<sup>2</sup> although there are passages in these poems which indicate clearly enough that the wedding ring had its proper part in the nuptial service.<sup>3</sup> In the period of the *Romans d'Aventure* the betrothal ring bore with it the signification of the iron *anulus pronubus* of Roman usage during the Republic,<sup>4</sup> from which the French betrothal ring has its origin, although the symbolic meaning which the church had succeeded in attaching to the betrothal ring had, by this time, divested it of its pagan significance; so much is this true, that the ring was ultimately confined to the marriage ceremony alone.

The descriptions of rings, as found in the *Romans d'Aventure*, represent them usually as jeweled with precious stones,<sup>5</sup> the colors of which range from deep red, almost violet, to the light red of pale rubies.<sup>6</sup> Diamonds in rings are not often mentioned.<sup>7</sup> Gold is usually the material employed. Rings are sometimes represented as possessing magic powers.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the symbols of betrothal other than the ring cf. *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 4393-4402.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the brief but clear account of a ring ceremony in *Diu Crône*, by HEINRICH VON DEM TÜRLIN, vv. 13855-60 (ed. SCHOLL), *Bibl. Litt. Ver. in Stuttgart*, Vol. XXVII, p. 170, col. 2 (1852).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. E. MARTÈNE, *De antiquis ecclesiae ritibus*, Vol. II, p. 612 (Antwerp, 1763-64): "*Benedictio super anulum*—Creator et Conservator humani generis, Dator aeternae salutis, omnipotens Deus, tu permitte Spiritum sanctum Paraclitum super hunc anulum. Per." Cf. *infra*, p. 26, n. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. DR. F. HOFMANN, "Über den Verlobungs- und den Trauring," *Sitzungsberichte der K. Akad. der Wissenschaften in Wien*, Vol. LXV, pp. 825-64 (Wien, 1870). The ring, as is made clear in this monograph, was as common to ordinary business transactions in ancient times as it was to the *sponsalia* ceremonies, and was not peculiar to, nor original with, betrothals. On the contrary, the element of bargain or exchange, dominant in marriage transactions, both in the fictitious sale of the Romans and the customs of the Germanic peoples, required an earnest or token of pledge. This ring of iron, used at Rome (in the empire, however, a gold ring was used), was also adopted amongst the Germans. Cf. also *Archæologia* (London, 1814), Vol. XVII, pp. 124-27.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Comte de Poitiers*, vv. 857, 858.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the expressions: "balais rubiz" in *Guillaume de Dole*, v. 3342; "jagonce" (garnet, dark red) in *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, v. 3001, and "La pierre fu toute vermeille" in *Roman de la Violette*, v. 886. The color green is also mentioned; cf. *L'Escoufle*, v. 3812: "Ki plus ert vers que fuelle d'ierre."

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *La Manékine*, v. 6067; also *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 2585, where the jewels of the Greek embassy are said to shine like glass. Cf. also *Paris et Vienne*, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *L'Escoufle*, vv. 4481 and 3813; also "La folie Tristan de Berne," *Romania*, Vol. XV, p. 573.



The *Romans d'Aventure* give several instances where, in lieu of a ring, a symbol for betrothal takes the form of a banner worked with gold, and is made for the woman, by her lover, in token of their troth.<sup>1</sup> Possibly this handiwork was given by the woman in exchange for a ring from her lover and not referred to by the poet. But it was common in the Middle Ages to use various symbols, in every-day life, on occasions that required the keeping of faith, even in trivial matters; so that a betrothal might have been consummated without any ring at all, though this is not very likely.<sup>2</sup> Another type of betrothals, in this connection of the ring, shows both man and woman making exchange of rings with each other.<sup>3</sup> In still another class should be included those instances where the woman, alone, presents a ring to her lover as a symbol of her constancy.<sup>4</sup>

Two cases have been noted in which a man offers a betrothal ring to his *fiancée*.<sup>5</sup> A singular example of a woman resorting to a trick is exhibited in one poem, where it is represented that a rejected suitor receives, supposedly from the lady who hitherto had not favored his suit, a ring and other emblems of good faith as a mark of her change of mind toward him and as a sign that she was willing now for him to accept her.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear from the *Romans d'Aventure* that the betrothal rings were ornamented with jewels, although precious stones, in the Middle Ages, were regarded superstitiously.<sup>7</sup> Upon what finger the betrothal ring was worn is not told.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Richars li Biaus*, vv. 5115, 5116; and *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 8335-66 but the *gon-fanon* here referred to is presented by the hero of the poem to Melior.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *La Vengeance de Raguidel*, vv. 1327-31. For the ring in other connections than betrothal *vide* DE JOINVILLE, *Hist. de St. Louis* (ed. J. N. DE WAILLY), pp. 61 and 86 (Paris, 1874), where business contracts are sealed by means of this symbol.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Amadas et Ydoine*, vv. 5780-97, and G. COQUILLART, *Œuvres*, Vol. II, p. 170 (Paris, 1745); also *Horn*, vv. 2049-55.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Claris et Laris*, vv. 28998-29010; *L'Escoufle*, vv. 4488, 4489; also *Floris et Liriope*, vv. 1139-46; and *Paris et Vienne*, p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Conte de la Violette*, vv. 884-89, where the ring is represented as having been given at some former time by the man to the woman. Also *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 3333-43, where a man makes a request of a woman through her mother for her *druërie*; cf. also *Flamenca*, vv. 10, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 4310-4401.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 24, n. 6, as to the kinds of precious stones used in rings. For the magic attributed to rings, *vide* *Amadas et Ydoine*, vv. 6430-32; also *Floire et Blanceflor*, vv. 1001-8.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Claris et Laris*, v. 29007; the words "son petit anel" refer to the ring then worn by the man, but represented as having been given him at some time previously by his betrothed.

## THE RING IN WEDDING.

According to historical tradition, the ring, symbolizing marriage, should be without jewels and perfectly smooth and round.<sup>1</sup> As far as can be seen, the *Romans d'Aventure* denote, by the same descriptive terms, that the wedding ring was as beautiful as the betrothal ring.<sup>2</sup> The same word is used for both.<sup>3</sup> The position of the ring upon the hand is usually designated by a word which means the little finger;<sup>4</sup> there is no way of telling upon which of the two hands either the betrothal or the wedding ring rested.<sup>5</sup> The church required the marriage ring to be set on the third finger of the left hand.<sup>6</sup> The instances showing the wedding ring in the possession of the woman do not represent her, however, as receiving it at the marriage service, although she could come to possess it only in that way.

## WEDDING PROCESSION.

The wedding procession to and from the church is the chief feature of all the nuptial ceremonies next to the solemnization of the marriage proper. In classic Roman life the procession of marriage was one of the indispensable ceremonies connected with this rite.<sup>7</sup> Although the church did not prescribe, in the times of the romances, or ever, the procession of the bridal party, yet the importance and fittingness of this function both to and from the sanctuary is evidence that the adoption of the pagan forms of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. PLINY (ed. K. MAYHOFF, Lips., 1897), *Hist. Nat.*, Vol. XXXIII, cap. 1, §§ 6 and 12; L. FRIEDLAENDER, *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms*, sechste Ausg. (Leipzig, 1888, p. 465.

<sup>2</sup> The expression "gent anel" is applied to a betrothal ring in *L'Escoufle*, v. 4488, and to a wedding ring in *Comte de Poitiers*, v. 268. Cf. *Aye d'Avignon*, vv. 2000-2, where the marriage ring contains three precious stones.

<sup>3</sup> The forms *aniaus*, *anels*, *anelet*, all occur in the poems, and are used interchangeably of both betrothal and wedding rings. *Bague* is a late mediæval word, not found in the romances.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W. FOERSTER, *Der Karrenritter* (Halle, 1899), p. 401. In a note to verse 4658 of *Lancelot*, Foerster derives *mame* from *minimus* and identifies it with *manel*, a little finger, upon which a ring was often worn.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *La Manékine*, v. 6311, where the heroine of the story has only a right hand upon which to put a ring.

<sup>6</sup> As late as the Council of Milan, 1576, special direction was given as to which hand should bear the marriage ring: "Non dextrae sed sinistrae manus sponsae digitis induatur annulo nuptiali."

<sup>7</sup> Cf. L. FRIEDLANDER, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 466; especially the references in the footnote to the works of KARLOWA, MARQUARDT, and ROSSBACH, respectively. Cf. also N. D. FUSTEL DE COULANGES, *La cité antique* (Paris, 1885), 11th ed., pp. 45, 46.



ceremony in this particular was not distasteful to Christian ideas. The obscene elements were, in part, removed from the Roman customs, and the church countenanced the traditions which obtained in French nuptial processions, just as it had sanctioned the pagan rites of marriage themselves, having adopted and spiritualized the ceremonies of *sponsalia* and *matrimonium*.<sup>1</sup>

The romances always give the time of day for a marriage as early morning, between the hours of 6 and 9 A. M., and most often the day of marriage falls in the early summer. The description of some wedding days includes the preliminary merry-making, and the narrative starts with sunrise to maintain the story of the occurrences until the night of the wedding day is far advanced and the guests are fairly wearied with wine and song.<sup>2</sup> That a formal invitation was sent to the dependents of a ruler is made plain in one romance which represents him as summoning his baronage to appear after a week's notice at the wedding of his chief general.<sup>3</sup> There is, however, no regularity expressed by the poets as to the invitation of guests to a wedding; there comes to the festivities usually a great number of nobles who take active part in the proceedings without, apparently, any invitation at all from either the bride or groom.<sup>4</sup> In the number of those who might be expected with certainty to assist at the wedding a noticeable lack sometimes occurs.<sup>5</sup> The knights visiting a castle whose lord was to marry did not receive their lodging within the walls of the castle proper, but were entertained at separate houses named *ostels*, bedecked for the occasion, with tapestries and banners, having upon them the armorial bearings of the knights there being entertained.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an account of Roman observances in wedding processions cf. CATULLUS, LXI (ed. R. ELLIS, London, 1876), pp. 167-92. Also, STATIUS, *Silvae* (ed. F. VOLLMER, Leipzig, 1898), pp. 61-70.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Galerent*, vv. 6905-18; *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 14964-75; *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6224-31; *Clariss et Laris*, vv. 29611-19.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *L'Escoufle*, vv. 1704-9, and the passage in *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 8435-60, where a written invitation to a wedding (*au noçoier*) is sent by messengers to the emperor of Rome. Cf. also *Chevaliers as deus espées*, vv. 5477-83.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 14938 ff. In *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 17982-89, the wedding festivity is restricted to only noble guests, whereas in *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6177-80, everyone is admitted freely.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *La Manékine*, vv. 2046-70, and *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 14938 ff., where, in each of these cases, the mothers of the grooms are absent from the weddings described.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 2937-47, and vv. 3441-44.

At a certain moment, probably upon the flourish of trumpets at the castle, the entire bridal company assembled and were arranged according to their various ranks, prior to their departure for the church.<sup>1</sup> There is clear reason to believe that the bride and her ladies passed, in a separate body, to the church and were followed later by the groom and his male friends.<sup>2</sup> The escorts, however, of the bride, mounted upon a mule or palfrey, were men who, themselves, were also mounted and rode, one on each side of the bride.<sup>3</sup> The poets, in their descriptions of these processions,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10759 ff; *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 3441-47; *Chevalier as deus espées*, vv. 5400-61, in which a wedding and coronation procession to a church is given in description; *Cléomadès*, vv. 17209-20.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Escanor*, vv. 23021-33; here the groom and bride proceed, apparently, together to the church, but the descriptions found in the romances just cited (*v. supra*, n. 1) give evidence of the separate parties, the bride with her train of attendants passing first, to the church. Cf. also, *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6073-82, for the account of the ceremony of assisting the brides to alight at the church portal, likewise *vide Gautier d'Aupais*, p. 32.

DESCRIPTION OF A PROCESSION IN A TRIPLE WEDDING FROM *GUILLAUME DE PALERNE* (1212 A. D.).

- I. The entire bridal party, both women and men, is mounted to start toward the church; vv. 8821-35.
- II. The order of procession, from the castle entrance, of the three brides; vv. 8841-57:
  1. *Partenidon* (escort) *Alexandrine* v. 8841.
  2. *King of Spain* (escort) *Melior* *Felise* (escort) vv. 8842-46.
  3. *Emperor of Germany* (escort) *Florence* *Brandc* (escort) v. 8847.
- III. Young women, matrons, court ladies, vv. 8833-35.
- IV. Servants carrying staves to clear the way, vv. 8855-57.
- V. The Brides enter the church and are escorted to the high altar, to await the Grooms, vv. 8860-67.
- VI. The Grooms (*Brandin*, *Guillaume*, *Alphonse*) leave the castle and proceed to the church after the brides, v. 8867.
  - a) Priests come out from the church to meet the Grooms.
  - b) Grooms and Priests meet midway to the church.
  - c) Ceremonies in the presence of the Grooms, vv. 8880-96.
- VII. The Grooms enter the church and are escorted to the high altar, to meet the Brides, vv. 8900, 8901.
- VIII. The Wedding Service, vv. 8905-9.
- IX. Coronation Service and Mass, vv. 8914-21.
- X. Return of the bridal party to the castle, in which the men pass first and the women afterward, thus reversing the order of procession from the castle to the church, vv. 8922 ff.

REMARKS: (a) In this procession the presence of women as escorts at the left hand of two of the three brides is noteworthy; in II, 1, the absence of a woman escort for Alexandrine is an oversight of the poet.

(b) In II, 2, the lady escort of Melior is the mother of her groom, Guillaume.

(c) The lady escort of Florence is the step-mother of her groom, Alphonse; cf. II, 3.

(d) In II, 1, Partenidon was to have married the bride who figures in II, 2, but was rejected by her; and after serving in this procession as escort to Alexandrine, returned to his father, the emperor of Greece.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 8842-47, where two brides have lady escorts who are the mothers of the two brides respectively.



lay particular emphasis upon the parts taken by the bride and her female attendants, and seem to overlook, nearly, the groom, in their attention to the bride's progress toward the church.<sup>1</sup> This interest concerns itself also with the dress of the bride and the preparation of her wedding costume. Minutely detailed accounts are given of the fabric, its colors, adornments and style.<sup>2</sup> As soon as the wedding service has been narrated, the poets then describe the return of the company to the castle,<sup>3</sup> where the clothing that has been worn before the priest, is exchanged for garments suitable to the banquet-hall.<sup>4</sup>

#### WEDDING BANQUET.

The feast was spread and all the guests were seated in order,<sup>5</sup> at tables richly supplied with varied and sometimes marvelous dishes for the delectation of those present.<sup>6</sup> Amusement was furnished in the form of dance or carol, or the baiting of bears, and games of chess and dice.<sup>7</sup> Mountebanks mingled their sportiveness, intended perhaps to delight the humbler folk who had gathered at the feast,<sup>8</sup> with the more serious efforts of the *jongleurs* who chanted their stories after the dinner to the old men seated apart

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Cléomadès*, vv. 17722-74; *Joufrois de Poitiers*, vv. 926-41. One of the salient characteristics of the *Romans d'Aventure*, as contrasted with the *Chansons de Geste*, is the attention paid by the poet to the bride in the wedding ceremonies; cf. T. KRABBES, "Die Frau im altfranzösischen Karls-Epos" in E. STENGEL'S *Ausg. u. Abh.*, XVIII (1884), pp. 41, 42.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 4711-15; *Escanor*, vv. 23036-39; *Comte de Poitiers*, vv. 908-25. Cf. also A. J. V. LE ROUX DE LINCY, *Les femmes célèbres de l'ancienne France* (Paris, 1858), Vol. I, pp. 47-54, and E. LAMESAUGÈRE, *Costumes des femmes françaises du XII<sup>e</sup> au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1827), p. 47; M. A. RACINET, *Costume Historique* (3<sup>e</sup> Livraison, *Europe—Le Moyen-Âge*), Paris, 1876-88. Occasionally a woman is said to wear a bridal crown; cf. *Galerent*, vv. 6887, 6888: "Puis li a sur sa sore teste, Une cercle estroicte d'or mise." Also *L'Escoufle*, vv. 8288, 8289: "Ele ot la blonde teste nue, Fors d'un cercle d'or a rubis."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 17055-17130.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 4755-58; and *La Manékine*, vv. 2321-23.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Floire et Blanceflor*, vv. 2843-78.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, vv. 2874-78.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. SCHULTZ, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 576; *Escanor*, vv. 23021-29, and *Le Chevalier à l'Epée*, vv. 788-806.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6057-60. Clowns and tumblers here form a part of the wedding cortege and doubtless serve to amuse the crowd at the banquet-hall as well. Noise of all kinds, the ringing of bells and very loud music characterize all the marriage occasions of the *Romans d'Aventure*. The sounds produced by the infinite variety of wind, string, and percussion instruments are likened by the poets to the thunders of heaven making a whole city tremble. Cf. *Histoire littéraire de la France* (Paris, 1842), Vol. XX, pp. 714-716, where a description of mediæval instruments of music is found.

in the hall and listening to the noble deeds of heroes long since past.<sup>1</sup> In this manner the afternoon wore into the evening of the wedding day and the evening into the late night, which found the guests still lingering around the board, or in the hall, until feast turned to revel. At length the bride was conducted to the nuptial chamber, where she was prepared by her lady attendants to receive her groom. Then occurred the benediction of the priest, who sprinkled with holy water the nuptial couch.<sup>2</sup>

#### WEDDING GIFT.

On the morrow in the early morning, was the time for gifts from the guests to the bride and the groom.<sup>3</sup> Whether the groom gave the bride a present, or *vice versa*, is not plain from the data supplied by the *Romans d'Aventure*.<sup>4</sup> Lavish gifts to the church are mentioned as being made by the bridal company, and are placed upon the altars for the priests to distribute later among the needy, not reserving any portion of the offering for themselves.

As with any of the functions of marriage that have been considered thus far, and the nature of their development, upon Christian soil in France, out of the pagan character possessed by them in Roman life, it is to be noticed, as well also in the matter of wedding gifts, that Germanic influences have not interfered appreciably with Roman tradition.<sup>5</sup> The *donum matutinale* is referred to indistinctly in several romances and but one instance points definitely to this Germanic custom.<sup>6</sup> On this first morning after

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Claris et Laris*, vv. 29611-19.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 3456, 3457; *Cléomadès*, vv. 17244-68; *L'Atre périlleux*, vv. 6637-42.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 5502-10; *Claris et Laris*, vv. 29673-81. Cf. also *Amadis de Gaule* (Lyon, 1588), Bk. IV, cap. iii, pp. 338, 339.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *La Manékine*, vv. 2345-60; *Cléomadès*, vv. 18017-30.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. LAISNEL DE LA SALLE, *op. cit.*, p. 31; also E. BELLOGUET, *Ethnogénie gauloise* (Paris, 1861-73), Vol. III, p. 390, and L. FALLUE, *Conquête des Gaules* (Paris, 1862), p. 195-99.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. E. LABOULAYE, *Condition civile et politique des femmes* (Paris, 1843), pp. 117-35; *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6282-88; and *Cléomadès*, vv. 17708-12. The influence of the church upon the institution of *Morgengabe* made itself felt in the conversion of the *pretium matutinale* into the dowry; in the *Histoire des Francs*, dowry and *pretium* are synonymous; cf. GUIZOT, *Mémoires sur l'Histoire de France* (Paris, 1823) Vol. II, p. 30, and footnote. French poetry affords an instance of the primitive character of the *pretium* in Merovingian times; cf. *La Vie de Saint Alexis*, vv. 41-45 (G. PARIS, ed.), Paris, 1872, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes-Études, Vol. VII.



the wedding day the bride and groom attended mass at the church, but there is no special ceremony connected with this event to need any elaboration at the poet's hands. The festivities subsequent to the wedding-day pleasures are not described in detail, but almost invariably the poems narrate how many days were taken up in celebrating the marriage at large. The length of time in which the visitors to the scene of the wedding are represented as remaining, varies between four days and sixty days,<sup>1</sup> usually, however, the guests and their hosts celebrate the occasion during one week, after which all take leave of the young husband and wife, wishing them happiness.

#### TIME OF WEDDING.

The festival days of most importance as indicated by the *Romans d'Aventure* are, in the order in which they occur during the year: *Pâques*, *Pentecôte*, *Toussaint*, *Noël*, and of these the first two are the most often mentioned.<sup>2</sup> These were all festival days of the church, lending themselves readily to the elaborate ceremonial of a royal or noble wedding. In contrast to the regular church seasons of religious festival, during which marriages were often solemnized, there were periods of the year in which a wedding was forbidden by the church.<sup>3</sup> From Septuagesima until after Easter, and three days before St. John's Day, and also from Advent until Epiphany the church refused to bless nuptials.<sup>4</sup> Doubtless these seasons were intended for fasting which terminated by general rejoicing on the feast days already designated.<sup>5</sup> Like the Romans, the French of the time in which fall the *Romans d'Aventure*, preferred the month of June for the celebration of weddings, whereas the month of May

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Cléomadès*, in which poem the festivities lasted only four days, while in *Floriant et Florete*, sixty days elapse.

<sup>2</sup> Other feast days are mentioned in the romances, especially "Jour de l'Ascension" and "Jour de Saint-Jean"; cf. *Lancelot*, v. 31; *Fergus*, v. 6916; *Erec et Enide*, v. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. SIRMOND, *Concilia antiquae Galliae* (Paris, 1629), p. 594; here, marriages are not allowed on Sundays because of the special reverence to be paid to that day.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. MARTÈNE ET DURAND, *Thesaurus Nov. Anec.* (Paris, 1717), col. 872, where, in the Gallican church, no marriage celebration was permitted during Advent.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10127, 10128: "Vigil ert de l'Asension, Que par costume june l'on," i. e., Rogation week.

was commonly regarded as untimely.<sup>1</sup> That May was an ill-omened month for a marriage seems, however, to have been only a popular idea of the lower classes during the Middle Ages<sup>2</sup> since numerous references are given in the *Romans d'Aventure* to weddings celebrated both on Ascension Day and at Pentecost.<sup>3</sup> Other seasons of the year referred to as times in which weddings took place are July and Christmas.<sup>4</sup> As the church was largely influential in the arrangement of the seasons for marriage, it is safe to infer that, where in the *Romans d'Aventure* no time of year is set down by the poet, the marriage he is describing fell upon some one of these important festivals.<sup>5</sup>

Since the anniversary of a church festival did not recur upon a fixed day of the week in each year a marriage ceremony of the nobles might happen upon any day on which that festival came. In the case of *Pâques* and *Pentecôte* also *Saint-Jean* and *Noël* the day varies from year to year. It is therefore difficult to say, from the data in the romances, just what specific days of the week were, or were not, acceptable for marriage from whatever point of view.<sup>6</sup> There are several instances noted in which Sunday is a day of wedding, notwithstanding the probable inconvenience involved to the priests, whose work in the usual mass celebrations incident to that day must have tended to prevent nuptials.<sup>7</sup> It is very likely that Wednesday and Friday were not

<sup>1</sup> Cf. "De veteri ritu nuptiarum observatio" in GRÆVIUS; *Thes. Ant. Rom.* (Paris, 1698), where it is shown that neither May nor February, nor the three days of March when the feast of the Salii was celebrated, were fitting times for marriage at Rome, but during June was the most favorable period. For references to St. John's Day in this connection cf. *Chevaliers as deus espées*, vv. 5260-63, and J. GRIMM, *Deutsche Mythologie*, 4te Aufl. (Berlin, 1875), Vol. I, pp. 513-15.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. LAISNEL DE LA SALLE, *Croyances et légendes du centre de la France* (Paris, 1875), p. 21; also *Romania* (1880), pp. 547-70, in particular, p. 547, footnote 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *La Manékine*, vv. 2077-80; *Flamenca*, vv. 184, 185. It will be remembered, also, that the marriage of the Doges with the Adriatic occurred on Ascension Day.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ille et Galeron*, vv. 3962-69; *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 5272-83; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 6111, 6112: "Au chief de l'an."

<sup>5</sup> In marriages of the Roman times the Calends, Nones, and Ides and all festival days, save for widows, were suitable for weddings; cf. MACROBIUS, *Conv. Saturn* (F. EYSENHARDT, ed.), I, XV, 21, 22 (Lips., 1893). For the Christian festivals cf. L. DUCHESNE, *Origines du culte chrétien* (2d ed., Paris, 1898), cap. vii, pp. 218-80.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. L. A. FRANKLIN, *La vie privée d'autrefois* (Paris, 1888), Vol. XVII, p. 34, and *Romania*, loc. cit., p. 548, n. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 31, n. 3; also *Galcrent*, v. 6706, and *Flamenca*, vv. 247, 248. In *Raoul de Cambrai*, vv. 6069, 6070, Sunday is given as a wedding day.



acceptable days for marriage; but that Thursday and Saturday were suitable seems clear.<sup>1</sup>

Upon the point of the time of day for a wedding the romances generally coincide; the custom described by the poets of a marriage at early dawn occurs commonly.<sup>2</sup> This part of the day was usual in Roman weddings in the late empire.<sup>3</sup> The early morning, or at least before noonday, was the proper time of weddings in France, and the custom may have been adopted from Roman usage, or, what is more likely, this time was due to the requirements of the church which ordered the solemnization of a sacrament by a fast from the middle of the night of the day on which the marriage was to occur.<sup>4</sup> Certain weddings are mentioned as occurring at other hours than the very beginning of day, but these are rare.<sup>5</sup> In a reckoning by number of the romances which refer at all to the time of day of a wedding celebration, four state simply at sunrise and two at 9 and 12 o'clock respectively.<sup>6</sup>

There are numerous romances that refer to a church building as the scene of a wedding. Excepting those marriages celebrated in castles, the general course taken was for the bridal party to form a procession and arrive before the church portal.<sup>7</sup> The edifice, thus reached, although an important enough factor in the ceremonies, does not receive more than a passing mention from the poet.<sup>8</sup> The description goes no farther than to say that the church was *long and wide* or that it was situated near some open

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 32, n. 7; Saturday as a day of consecration to the Virgin Mary was a favorable day for marriage. In the *Romance of Mélusine* Monday is a wedding day, and in *Hugues Capet* Thursday is given.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Richars li Biaus*, vv. 3957, 3958; *Fergus*, vv. 6905-8; *Joufrois de Poitiers*, vv. 3507-9; *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 14938, 14939.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. L. FRIEDLAENDER, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 466.

<sup>4</sup> The romances show that this fasting after midnight of the wedding day was not always observed: cf. *Joufrois de Poitiers*, vv. 2106-17; *Chevalier au Cygne*, vv. 172-78.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10432-34; *Flamenca*, v. 295; *Guillaume de Palerne*, v. 3539: Here the father of the bride grows angry over the delay of a wedding, complaining that it is already 9 A. M. (tierce).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Flamenca*, v. 295; the time of this context is midday for the wedding, and the groom displays his impatience seemingly at the delay; he is represented as very happy when the service was over and the affair "done with," as the poet implies.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Richars li Biaus*, vv. 410 ff.; *Flor et Jehanne*, p. 97; *Sonc de Nausay*, vv. 17017-54; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 4724-41, and *supra*, p. 22, n. 2.

<sup>8</sup> The words used for church building in the poems, are: "glise," "mestre glise," "le plus mestre glise," "li plus rice mostier majour," etc.

place or square.<sup>1</sup> Bells are referred to in the narratives, and are always designated as *saints* possibly because of the name, inscribed on the bell, of the patron saint of the church.<sup>2</sup> Where a ceremony is referred to as occurring in a castle, the same religious formalities may be supposed for the secular places as were prescribed for a church edifice. The officiant in a castle is entitled *chapelains*, and the place of his functions is called *chapelle*.<sup>3</sup> What part the church portal played in the celebrating of a wedding service is not to be gathered from the romances.<sup>4</sup>

#### BENEDICTIO THALAMI.

The ceremony, practiced during the Middle Ages in the Romish church, of sprinkling a bridal bed is founded upon classic tradition. The romance of *Éracles*, of Greek origin,<sup>5</sup> shows the bride as bathing two whole days before her marriage,<sup>6</sup> conformably with Greek religious custom, where bathing of the body, entire, was practiced.<sup>7</sup> As to Roman observances on this point, the use of running water was made with which to sprinkle the bride, or in fact to wash the feet of the bride and groom as a substitute for the Greek practice, but symbolical also of the idea of purity which bathing conveyed to the Greeks.<sup>8</sup> This pagan rite with its underlying motive received acceptance also in

<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Cléomadès*, vv. 17764, 17765; *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 4984, 4985: "Au moustier mon segnor S. Pierre, Qui ert coverz de fueille[s] d'ierre;" *Fergus*, vv. 5730, 5731: "Devant la tour a.l. moustier, Ki ert molt nobles et molt chier."

<sup>2</sup>The names of the churches as given are, among the rest: S. Danmartin, S. Martin, S. Moysant, S. Nicholas, S. Piere, S. Pol, S. Wast. Authorities differ with respect to the origin of the Old French *saint* = *cloche*; in *Romania*, XVII (1888), p. 188, M. Paris derives the word from the Latin *signum* and not from *sanctum*, an error, as he affirms, handed down from mediæval times, although he does not give any proof for his support of the former etymon. No patroness saints are recorded in connection with the names of a church. As to bells, cf. *L'Escoufle*, vv. 3315 and 3845.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *La Manékine*, v. 2032; *Le comte d'Artois*, p. 15; also VIOLLET-LE-DUC, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 103. In *L'Escoufle*, v. 8215, "Les églises del castel" occurs.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. A. CHÉRUEL, *Dictionnaire historique*, Vol. II (Paris, 1855), p. 735, and BEAUCHET, *op. cit.*, p. 41, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. PARIS, *Manuel d'ancien Français* (Paris, 1890), p. 82.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. E. LÖSETH, *Éracles* (Paris, 1890), p. 31.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. EURIPIDES' *Phænissæ* (DINDORF, ed., Oxford, 1882), vv. 344-49, p. 117; and the *Scholia Græca* (*ibid.*, Oxford, 1863), Vol. III, p. 126; also ARISTOPHANES, *Comædiæ* (ed. HALL ET GELDART, Oxford, 1900), Vol. II, vv. 377, 378 of the *Lysistrata*.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. A. ROSSBACH, *Untersuchungen über die römische Ehe* (Stuttgart, 1853), p. 366; FESTUS, *De verborum significatione*, Bk. VI; THILO ET HAGEN, *Servius, Commentarii in Vergilium* (Lips., 1881), p. 493.



Christian ceremonial. Just in what manner the priest's blessing, and the use of water, came in as a church function could not be entered upon here, though the custom is referred to very early.<sup>1</sup> The examples of bed-blessing are few in Old-French poetry; still they do occur, at intervals, until the later prose romances.<sup>2</sup> The *Romans d'Aventure* exhibit what may be two forms of the bed ceremony: one, where the priest blesses the couple as they lie together in bed;<sup>3</sup> the other, where the bride is ushered into the nuptial chamber by her relatives or her attendants.<sup>4</sup> Of the former manner of bed-blessing there are four examples given, whereas of the latter there are but two.<sup>5</sup> This second class shows the priest as having completed the benediction<sup>6</sup> before the bridegroom appears at the chamber door.<sup>7</sup> One instance of a bed-blessing ceremony which gives an illustration of the scene together with the text, represents in the picture both bride and groom in bed at once, about to receive the *benedictio thalami*, but the narrative implies that the bride was put to bed first by her women attendants, and, after they had left the chamber, the groom entered and prepared himself to retire in time to receive the blessing of the priest when he appeared. Whatever the precise order of events prescribed, whether the bride alone received lustration, as seems to have been the case at Rome, or whether bride and groom had to be sprinkled as they were in bed is not

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Le Fresne*, vv. 415-20, and *Anseis de Carthage*, vv. 720-35; also *Gaufrey*, vv. 7416, 7417. In MARTÈNE, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 616, 617, the sprinkling of the groom and bride is referred to as the pair enter the church.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Comte d'Artois*, p. 27; also *Mélusine* (*Bibl. Elzéev.*, Vol. LXXIV), pp. 64, 65 (Paris, 1854).

<sup>3</sup> It was usual in the Middle Ages for both refined and common people alike to wear no night clothing in bed; on this point cf. *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, vv. 1214, 1215 and 1279, 1280; *Durmars li Galois*, v. 15162. For the description of a bed cf. *La Vengeance de Raguidel*, vv. 3667-70.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Claris et Laris*, vv. 29654-60; *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 6261-81; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 4785-99; in this example, the priest blessed the bed even before the bride and groom had retired and while it was yet empty. Cf. also *L'Escoufle*, vv. 1739-46, and *Cligès*, vv. 3329-35, and *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 15155-60.

<sup>5</sup> J. BARROIS, *Li livre du très chevalereux comte d'Artois* (Paris, 1837), p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. MARTÈNE, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 622, 623, under *Benedictio thalami*: "Benedic, domine, thalamum hunc et omnes habitantes in eo ut in tua pace consistant et in tua voluntate permaneant et in amore tuo vivant et senescant et multiplicentur in longitudinem dierum. Per."

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Jehan et Blonde*, v. 4791; in this context there is a curious account of the groom searching about at the entrance to the chamber in order to assure himself that there are no intruders near.

to be determined from the romances. In connection with this ceremony notice should be taken of a substitute for the lustration observance which was adopted later as a more refined form of procedure, namely, the use of the *abrifol* in wedding celebrations.<sup>1</sup> Two *Romans d'Aventure* refer to this covering for the bride and groom as they stood before the priest.<sup>2</sup>

#### MORAL STANDARD IN BETROTHAL.

In order to fill out the discussion of the content of the *Romans d'Aventure* with reference to the general subject, it is necessary to take account of the moral attitude of a bride to a groom and of husband to wife, as it is represented in the words of the poets. If, as is usually accepted, the *Romans d'Aventure* were meant for the pleasure, specially, of women rather than men, it is allowable to suppose that these poems, broadly considered, represent a higher moral standard than otherwise might be, on that account.<sup>2</sup> Only the more salient features of this part of the subject can be noted, for the reason that the data are too complex to admit of minute classification. In the first place, a question of almost moral import, for those times, arising in the minds of women about to marry was the rank of their lovers.<sup>3</sup> A favorite situation with the poets is to represent a young man, apparently of obscure origin, brought by accident into acquaintanceship with

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. BRAND, *Popular Antiquities* (ed. H. ELLIS, London, 1843), Vol. II. pp. 141-43.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10822, 10823: "Trois chiers palies tint on desus, Si comme costume est et us;" *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 17893-99. Also cf. MARTÈNE, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 624, where the use of a carecloth is mentioned in a church ceremonial before 400 A. D. Lustration and the *abrifol* may, therefore, have gone along, side by side, and the latter ceremony must have survived owing to the more seemly character of the ceremonial; cf. L. DUCHESNE, *op. cit.*, p. 417, and J. BOLLAND, "Acta Sanctorum," *Vita S. Emmerammi* (Paris, 1867), Vol. VI, p. 497, col. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 6255 and 6255-63; here the poet expresses a subjective view of chastity which may be discounted in view of the fact that it appears to be, in the underlying motive of the poem, rather a prejudice. Cf. also *Richars li Biaus*, vv. 4105-12 and 4120-25.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Escanor*, vv. 9307-24; *Comte de Poitiers*, vv. 879-81 and 84-88. A jealous mother is shown to remonstrate with her husband concerning the subject of disparity in rank even if the daughter does not object; cf. *Flore et Jehanne*, pp. 94, 95. In like manner, the inferiority of the woman brings about the same objections as in the case of the man; cf. *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 860-70; *Chevaliers as deus espées*, vv. 2822-35; *Galerent*, vv. 1617-26; *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, vv. 1134-60. Cf. also *La chastelaine de Saint-Gille*, p. 23, where a noblewoman exclaims against a plan of marriage where her rank is involved: *J'aim miex un chapelet de flors que mauves mariage*. In this same connection cf. P. RAJNA, *Le Corti di Amore* (Milano, 1890), pp. 20 and 66.



a woman of noble birth. This woman in the course of time becomes enamored of him, and then there follows in the poem a soliloquy from her which usually exhibits the struggle between love and duty.<sup>1</sup>

The character of the love which a man holds for a woman and a woman for a man is generally refined, and, within the limitations of the morality pertaining to those times, sincere.<sup>2</sup> While the woman is the more susceptible to love, the man does not always conceal his feelings.<sup>3</sup> Each one is represented as maintaining an ideal of the other in their minds.<sup>4</sup> Integrity of life in a woman before her marriage and constancy to her betrothal vow, are, in some *Romans d'Aventure* the whole fabric of the story.<sup>5</sup> Parental or other control, which often determined for a woman just who her lover should be, in spite of her own preferences,<sup>6</sup> is recorded, in the poems, as either set wholly aside, or thwarted by means of ingenious stratagem.<sup>7</sup> The young woman, however, is generally allowed to go on her own way in such circumstances, and as the poem nears the end receives forgiveness for her indiscretion.<sup>8</sup> That the betrothal pledge, whether made by the two lovers in secret or openly, was considered inviolable, is very clear in the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 1574-86; *L'Escoufle*, vv. 2890-92.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Méraigis de Portlesguez*, vv. 1113-19. The instances of moral laxity such as are found in *Joufrois*, vv. 4407-9 and 3949-4007, and in *Conte de la Violete*, vv. 3921-34, also, *L'Escoufle*, vv. 3284-87 are not at all examples of refined manners, although they do not vitiate the fidelity of the lovers to each other but rather indicate the strength of it; in the courtship of Guillaume and Aëlis, the hero of this last-mentioned poem is made to say to the emperor who wished to take his daughter away from the young man: "Bien saciés sous son bliaut de Sire," and a little farther on the girl explains innocently: "Tantes foies que ma main ne s'ose Muchier aves mis Vos beles mains qui sont si blanches A cest bel ventre et a ces hanches Et tasté mon cors en tos sens!"

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *La Vengeance de Raguidel*, vv. 1323-27 and 1331, 1332; *Fergus*, vv. 1848-56; *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 3927-33; cf. *Claris et Laris*, vv. 15202-15; here, the hero dilates on the matter of his love in thirteen verses, each line beginning with the word *Amours*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 9397-9410, and vv. 9343-72.

<sup>5</sup> These poems are: *Guillaume de Palerne*, *Conte de la Violete*, *Joufrois de Poitiers*, *Amadas et Ydoine*, *Comtesse de Ponthieu*. Cf. *Anglia*, Vol. VI (1883), pp. 1-46.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Floris et Liriope*, vv. 977, 978.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *La Manékine*, vv. 726-29, where the heroine chops off her left hand to avoid a marriage with her own father, a union which the clergy for some reason had sanctioned. Other cases of elusion are cited in *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 3589-3613, and *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 5571-74.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 1141, 1142, for an example of the freedom exercised by a single woman as against that of a girl in Roman times, before her marriage, as given by FRIEDLAENDER, *op. cit.*, p. 464. Cf. also *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 5359-61.

*Romans d'Aventure*.<sup>1</sup> Should an engagement by any chance have to be cancelled, an indemnity was obligatory.<sup>2</sup> The unmarried women of the *Romans d'Aventure* appear to disadvantage when compared with those of the modern world, particularly with reference to their obvious boldness in approaching a man about marriage and in making open their minds first to him about their love.<sup>3</sup> There seemed to be more deference required by a young unmarried woman than by women who were married.<sup>4</sup>

The motives which actuated a man contemplating marriage are most commonly set down as material; this is true also of the woman, in her relation to the man.<sup>5</sup> Yet above these mercenary incentives there rested a religious spirit of a sort which served to deter improper unions, and it is usually the woman who gives evidence of this.<sup>6</sup>

#### MORAL STANDARD IN MARRIAGE.

In the *Romans d'Aventure* the word *druërie*<sup>7</sup> connotes incest,<sup>8</sup> or a marriage not in keeping with decency,<sup>9</sup> or, on the other hand, this word defines a perfectly proper relation of a man towards a woman.<sup>10</sup> So also *drus* and *drue* possess the meaning of lover in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Galerent*, vv. 6822-73; *Cléomadès*, 4740-44. Other cases of this same kind are exemplified in *Galerent*, vv. 2373-79; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 1893-95; *Livre de Baudoyne*, pp. 145, 146; *Ipomédon*, vv. 10501, 10502 and 10511, 10512. In a very late romance the same element is found; cf. *Jehan de Paris* (ed. MABILLE, Paris, 1855; *Bibl. Elzévir.*), pp. 115, 116.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Flore et Jehanne*, p. 96, and P. CHABRIT, *De la Monarchie française ou de ses lois* (Paris, 1783), Vol. I, p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. MÉRAY, *La vie au temps des Cours d'Amours* (Paris, 1876), p. 217. It is to be noticed that a young woman, in spite of her proposal to marriage, declares against taking the first step; cf. *Fergus*, vv. 1855, 1856: "Miex vauroie estre mise en biere, Que primes d'amour le requiere;" also *Ille et Galeron*, vv. 3349-58.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Galerent*, vv. 5343-59; *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 10273-78; *Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'Amour*, vv. 700-22; also *Amadis de Gaule*, Bk. IV (Lyons, 1588), pp. 290, 291.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Comte d'Artois*, p. 83, and *Li livre de Baudoyne*, p. 45, in which a woman exclaims: "il ne me chaust se le mary que j'auray n'est gueres riche; car je le suis asses, je ne demande fors qu'il desporte mes oultrages." Cf. also *Ille et Galeron*, vv. 6523-28 and 6547-51.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Cléomadès*, vv. 7121-32; *La Manékine*, vv. 555, 710, 711; *Galerent*, vv. 3196, 3197; *Sone de Nausay*, vv. 2735-50. The citation from *Cléomadès* referred to here, reveals the poet as lauding the good old days when men married for love and not for the marriage portion; in the *Chevalier à l'épée*, vv. 776-79, is given an instance of what the Flemish minstrel Adenet le Roi yearns for in *Cléomadès*.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. KOERTING, *Etym. Wbuch.*, s. v., not a Celtic word but from a German stem.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Richars li Biaus*, vv. 741 and 5032.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Partonopeus de Blois*, vv. 9409-12; *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, vv. 1119-29.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Comte de Poitiers*, v. 986; also *Richars li Biaus*, v. 5008; this context affords a clear contrast of proper and improper love as expressed in the term *druërie*.



good and bad senses.<sup>1</sup> The relation, of a man about to marry, to the woman is expressed in a variety of ways,<sup>2</sup> and the names for husband<sup>3</sup> and wife are several.<sup>4</sup> As indicative of endearment, either before or after marriage, the words *ami* and *amie* are preferred.<sup>5</sup>

The relation of the sexes either before or after married life begins is not always ideal in the *Romans d'Aventure*. There are scenes portrayed reflecting the moral condition of those times, which exhibit both good and bad tendencies.<sup>6</sup> Whether the romances are accurate to the letter in their delineation of life in this particular it is difficult to determine.<sup>7</sup> There is no doubt that felicity in married life among the nobles, of whom these poems treat, was attained and fostered to an extent closely approaching modern ideas.<sup>8</sup> When a woman is represented as seeking the company of some man other than her own husband, it is because either his age or jealous nature makes life a burden to her and to himself alike.<sup>9</sup> The penalty for breach of the marriage vows by a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *L'Escoufle*, vv. 4420, 4421; *Ipomédon*, v. 2993; *Comte de Poitiers*, v. 1102; *Lai de Melion* (ed. F. MICHEL, Paris, 1840), p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Guillaume de Palerne*, v. 8767, where a man is said to take a woman in marriage "A per, a feme et a compaigne; *Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'Amour*; v. 3517; "Puis vous prenderei a moillier;" *Roman de Mahomet*, p. 21: "Sa dame a femme prent."

<sup>3</sup> The words, *mari*, *baron* in *La Manékine*, v. 523: "De mes barons baron vous doing;" *sires*, in *Escanor*, v. 3440, occur in the meaning of husband.

<sup>4</sup> The terms, *femme* and *dame* (*Galerent*, vv. 1585, 1586: "Dame seray de sa maison, Sa femme et sa loyal espouse;" *moiller*, *La Manékine*, v. 2366; *oissor*, *L'Escoufle*, v. 2175, are employed interchangeably for "wife."

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Cligès*, vv. 1392-97; *Claris et Laris*, v. 29662; *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 1139-41.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Amadas et Ydoine*, vv. 1980 ff.; *Éracle*, vv. 2954-57; *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 15713 ff.; *Lai du Cor*, vv. 345-48; *Livre de Baudouyn*, p. 144—these are examples of good morals. *L'Escoufle*, vv. 6531-40, 7880 ff.; *Joufrois de Poitiers*, vv. 3949-4007; *Conte de la Violette*, vv. 735-46; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 1511-48; *Flamenca*, vv. 6885-73, are instances of questionable manners.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. SCHULTZ, *op. cit.*, , pp. 580-82 and 595-613: E. DE LA BEDOLLIÈRE, *Histoire des mœurs et de la vie privée des Français* (Paris, 1847), Vol. II, p. 186.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 33-35, 38-45, 14875 ff.; *La Manékine*, vv. 2433 ff. and 6374. Exhortations from parents to their newly married daughters to "love, honor, and obey" their husbands appear in *Cléomadès*, vv. 18199-18207, and *Guillaume de Palerne*, vv. 9019-38 and 9067-76.

<sup>9</sup> Unconscionable disparity in the ages of a man and woman at marriage is shown occasionally in the poems: cf. *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, vv. 1263-70; *Durmars li Galois*, vv. 121 and 148 ff.. For an instance of a disagreeable husband as the cause of separation from his wife cf. *Flamenca*, vv. 3240-49, and *Roman de la Poire*, vv. 1422-30.

married woman was unusually severe.<sup>1</sup> Of divorce, as it is known today, there are no real cases in the *Romans d'Aventure*, although several examples are found which make clear that a separation of body could be consummated on sufficient grounds with regard either to husband or wife.<sup>2</sup>

The names of certain saints are mentioned in connections where goodly offices are needed by married women in their behalf. The Virgin Mary appears to be, in the romances, a tutelary genius of married women and protectress of orphans unmarried.

As between the twelfth century and the thirteenth, concerning morality at large it is known that the former period was inferior in standard to the latter. The literature of both centuries offers this contrast, however, in that the earlier period ingenuously confesses the truth about itself in the *Chansons de Geste* whilst the thirteenth and following centuries cannot claim more than a guarded and self-conscious statement of the truth for its poets. This renders it difficult to determine just how far the *Romans d'Aventure* may be relied on to have reproduced the actual moral life of the age of their writers. In other particulars, it seems safe to believe the facts as to that which these *trouvères* have described in their writings on affairs of daily life and on the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Joufrois de Poitiers*, vv. 240 ff., and *Bisclavret* (ed. K. WARNKE). Halle, 1900, vv. 231-35.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Éracles*, vv. 5095 ff.; *Flamenca*, vv. 6688 ff.; *Jehan et Blonde*, vv. 5343, 5344; *Amadas et Ydoine*, vv. 7275 ff. Sometimes the repudiation of a wife by her husband occurs after the manner of Roman custom; cf. *Flore et Jehanne*, pp. 120, 121. The Old French *dessevrement* was confused subsequently with divorce, but falsely, because the former word denotes the simple authorization of the church for a separation of body, without any liberty for either party to marry again; cf. GUIZOT, *Hist. de la civilisation en France* (Paris, 1872), p. 128. Cf. also *Eliduc* (ed. K. WARNKE), Halle, 1900, vv. 1120-30. In *Guillaume le Maréchal*, which is not fiction but history, may be seen how the demands of feudal life could override church regulations concerning repudiation and could obviously force a procedure "contre sainte église;" cf. this poem of the middle of the twelfth century in *Romania*, XI, 1882, p. 52, vv. 370-80; also M. MEYER's comments, *ibid.*, pp. 42, 43.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Guillaume d'Angleterre*, vv. 496-502, where a mother in the throes of childbirth prays Holy Mary for aid; *Comte de Poitiers*, vv. 423 ff., in which a woman invokes the Virgin to witness to her purity as the wife of the count. Cf. also the expressions in *Floriant et Florete*, vv. 5038-40: "En l'église sainte Marie, Qui les orphelines marie;" *Claris et Laris* vv. 8485, 8486: "La tres douce virge Marie, Qui les orfelines marie." A newly married queen is represented as honoring the Holy Mother in her daily life, and following her example by marrying off poor but refined women; cf. *La Manekinc*, vv. 2433-35: "Povres gentils femmes marie, Mout par demaine sainte vie Ele honneroit Dieu et sa mere." In the poem *Éracles*, vv. 2954-57 and 2966, 2967 the same is said of Queen Athenaïs just after her marriage: "Messés fait chanter et matines, Et fait nourrir cez orfelines, Pour l'amour Deu, le fil Marie Et Pour l'amour Deu les marie."



customs of the nobility class especially with which they came into closer contact than did any other profession.<sup>1</sup>

The writer intends to give, in a future contribution, the results of an investigation, similar in character to this present one, but concerned with mediæval German betrothal and nuptial rites and based upon a survey of Middle High German literature and the German laws incident to these ceremonials in the Middle Ages.

F. L. CRITCHLOW.

PRINCETON, N. J.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Histoire littéraire*, Vol. XXII, pp. 841-51; W. P. KER, *Epic and Romance* (London, 1897), pp. 375 ff. and 393; H. MICHELANT, Introductions to: *Blancandin* (Paris, 1867), *Guillaume de Palerne* (Paris, 1876), and *Escanor* (Tübingen, 1886).





#### LIFE

The writer of the above monograph was born at Belle Vue, Hyde Road, Manchester, England, in 1869. He received the degree of A. B. (Princeton) in 1896. During his residence at Johns Hopkins he followed courses under ARMSTRONG, BLOOMFIELD, ELLIOTT, GRIFFIN, MARDEN, OGDEN and WARREN, professors at the University, and under Dr. MURRAY P. BRUSH. To them all he offers respectful homage.

























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